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BIRD OF THE BUSH

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BIRD OF THE BUSH

A COLLECTION OF
POEMS

BY

GEORGE SUMMERSS

TORONTO
THE HUNTER-ROSE COMPANY, LIMITED
TEMPLE BUILDING
1908

Entered according to Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year one thousand nine hundred and eight, by George Summerss, at the Department of Agriculture.

Western Mind
6-18-1924

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

GEORGE SUMMERSS

BORN JULY 13th, 1834

Let no man suppose that I am prompted to write this sketch of my life by a fear that it will never be written unless by myself. My fear, so far as fear enters into the matter, is quite the reverse; my purpose being to forestall any other man. While many men can with ease appear to be what they are not, I always found it hard to appear what I was; and I have been misjudged and misunderstood all my life, even by my own friends; and my heart has often been mangled and lacerated by those who would have spared me, had they known me capable of feeling anything less pointed and penetrating than a bayonet or the spear of Hector.

In addition to the reasons above, I have one more and a good one, that will be treated before I affix my initials.

My parents were English people, and from Yorkshire; my mother's maiden name was Jane Adamson, and, with a daughter nine years of age, they sailed for Quebec in 1829; and after a stormy voyage of eight weeks, they landed in that city. After staying a few days in Quebec, they took boat for Montreal, and in that city my father met a Dr. Carr, who practised in St. Andrew's, a village about fifty miles westward of Montreal, and on the north shore of the Ottawa River. The doctor wanted a man with some education to serve him as general purpose man. My father had a much higher education than the situation called for; and a contract was soon made, and my father and mother, and their little daughter, went home with Dr. Carr, who found them a house, and gave them all the aid they needed. But my father did not remain long in the employ of Dr. Carr. About this time a new school was needed for the people on the river shore, and about three miles from the village; my father learning this, applied to the superintendent of the district, a Mr. Dose, an Anglican minister, for a teacher's certificate, and got one, and got the school, and taught it for eleven years. My father's learning consisted in writing like copyplate, and all the knowledge of grammar that Lenie's little book could give; a good knowledge of arithmetic, including logarithms; and mensuration and land survey-

ing. He brought from England a Gunter's chain and arrows, and offset staff, etc.; these my father gave to me, although my elder brother was his favorite. A year or two after the death of my father, I lent these instruments to Anthony Steel, who lived about ten miles west of London on the Sarnia road. He neglected to return them, and I to call for them, till his death; and then his widow and son refused to give them up, and declared they were bought from me. The widow died soon after, and the son, William Steel, was killed a few years ago at a railway crossing on his own farm, and my instruments passed to some of the family. My father's school and dwelling were both on the margin of a great duck resort, and the sporting element in an Englishman's character soon began to develop in the schoolmaster. He soon had a gun, a hunting dog, and a canoe, and a set of nets for large fish; and he soon became an authority on all matters pertaining to duck-hunting and the taking of fish; and gentlemen coming there to hunt ducks were directed to him for all information they might desire; and as far as the duties of his school would permit, he was leader of the party, and generally was well paid for his services. There was in the village a house called the Manor House; it was the headquarters of both Church and State at that time, and where all officials of both were wont to rendezvous. Many and grand were the feasts in

this house, to which my father supplied the game, and at some of them he sate. During the first half of my father's term as schoolmaster, he had only a single-barrel gun, but he wanted a double-barrelled one, and the opportunity of getting one was given him by chance. Two English gentlemen came to have a duck hunt, and after showing them over the ground he left them to their sport. The next day, while urging their canoe through the long reeds on the margin of the bay, they lost a gun in the water, valued at $250. They offered the schoolmaster $20 to recover the gun. He put a long handle in a garden rake, the water being eight feet deep, and after several vain efforts, he got it, and got the $20. He knew a man who was willing to give ten dollars for his single gun, so he wrote a firm in Montreal touching a new gun and they sent him a pamphlet with cuts of several guns of different makes, weights, calibres and prices. He chose a light gun of very small calibre, priced at $30, and sent the money, with instructions to ship to Cario—but now called Carillion. After getting notice of shipment, and waiting due time for arrival, he gave a man fifty cents for an old horse to go for his gun, a distance of about six miles. He found his gun waiting for him in a splendid case, and having looked it over to his satisfaction he started for home, but Fate seemed to think that events had lately been too much in his favor, and that he ought to be given a lesson on

the vanity of human wishes, so after going about two miles on his way home, the old horse fell under him, and gave two or three kicks and was dead. My father walked home with the saddle on his back, and my mother saw him coming; she met him at the front gate with: "Surely the old horse did not die on the road?" "That's just what he did do," replied my father. The owner of the horse demanded $20 of my father, who refused to give more than five, and the case was left to arbitration; the horse was valued at eight dollars; and as his use was paid for, his owner should take half of all risks, so the schoolmaster was taxed $4.

About ten days after my father got his new gun, he got also a new son—and I am he! My authority for all I have written thus far, is a mother entertaining her boy with the history of the family before his time; corroborated by my father and my eldest sister, who was in her fourteenth year at my birth. The story of the new gun and the old horse furnished food for many a laugh and joke long after. But the gun made ample amends for the misfortune attending it. It supplied the family table with ducks galore, and earned many pounds sterling from the Manor House. I have it from my father that his gun, his muskrat traps and his nets brought him yearly more than half of his school salary, which was $200 or $250, I am not sure which. But to my

theme, myself: The first five or six years of a boy's life is spent in getting big enough to learn the alphabet; but in my case, in the latter half of that period, was laid the corner-stone, aye! the whole foundation of that mental structure that Fate, either in spite or mistaken kindness, predestined to be mine. I have it from my mother that as soon as I was able to talk my father carried me to school in his arms, daily, and put into my hand a card of the alphabet first, and then the multiplication table; and then the other tables of arithmetic, and I solemnly avow that my memory does not reach back to the time when I did not know all these tables, and all my life they have been just the same as if I had been born with a full knowledge of them. After I had mastered the usual easy lessons in reading at an unusual age, some of our friends gave me a small volume of poems, a collection from various authors, of moral pieces suitable for the young to read. It was a great book to me; and taught me to read as no other book could have done and impressed indelibly on my soul the curse of my life. The last time the superintendent visited the school (the Rev. Mr. Dose, of the Manor House), my father presented me as a sample of his small scholars. The old parson gave me a chapter in the Testament to read; I read it, and when done Mr. Dose patted me on the head in a complimentary manner. My age at this time was five

years and three or four months; this was in the autumn of 1839, when the family was preparing to move up to London. As another testimony of the false promises I gave at this age, when we were about to leave, the Rev. Mr. Dose, of Manor House, asked my parents to leave me with him, promising to educate me for the Church. My father gave his consent, but my mother was my mother, and she would not leave me. It would perhaps have been better for me if she had consented; but it was, doubtless, fortunate for the Church that she did not. Before leaving the scene of my birth, I will give it a determinate location. If school maps are correct, the most eastern yard of Ontario land that is washed by Ottawa water is directly opposite the small farm on which my father's school and dwelling stood, and on which I first saw the light. The farm was owned by a man named Holbright, and is now owned by his son, Nelson Holbright. This farm is about a mile and a half below the confluence of the North River, and opposite the upper end of French Island—now called Jones Island. The Ottawa River is all that divides the place of my birth from the nearest point of the province in which my life was spent, save the first five years. When the family left here in the autumn of 1839, it consisted of father, mother, and five children, four of whom were born here; and of these seven, I only was fated ever to return. On the ninth of August,

1904, after an absence of sixty-five years, I stood on the ground once occupied by the house in which I was born. Was it a pleasure to me to stand on that spot of ground? Yes, it was; but it was the grimmest pleasure with which my heart ever pulsated; it was a moment of unique feeling; and the reader can imagine better than I can describe the long train of memories—the weird phantoms of vanished days, that crowded my half-bewildered brain. Amidst the memories and emotions of the moment, I could not forbear the wish that the spot might be both my cradle and my grave. But my narrative must now take leave of the place of birth, and follow the family westward to the vicinity of London. The most important event, to me at least, was the loss of my precious book of poems; which gave me all the mental anxiety and pain that any child can feel; but like all childish griefs, it wore off; but as Cowper says of his mother: "Though I mourned less, I never forgot." Our journey to our new home I will pass over, as I do not remember much of it distinctly. My father had a married sister living eighteen miles north-west of London, in the township of Lobo (Wolf, in English), and well named), and the home of this sister and her husband was the goal of our journey, where we arrived late in the autumn of 1839. When we reached London, my father met his younger brother, James, by appointment, who also was

in quest of land, but had left his family to follow when sent for. He went out with us to Lobo, and after greetings with their sister and husband (George Stonehouse), and a day's rest, the two brothers started out to locate their land. They chose the north half of lot 14, concession 11, 100 acres, and learned that lawyer Cleverly, of London, was agent for the land, and also lot 15, adjoining. They hurried to London to see Mr. Cleverly; he told them he was agent for the two lots, but the owner had gone to England without giving him power of attorney, and all he could do at that time was to receive their application, and that the owner would be back in the spring and the business could all be transacted then. He told them they could enter on the land at once, and take no risk of trouble, as they would get the first chance, and all justice. All things promising well, the brothers divided the land; my father taking the east fifty acres, and James the west.

With the aid of their brother-in-law, George Stonehouse, and his big boys, and the ever-willing neighbors, though few, they soon rushed up their log houses, and soon occupied them, and were ready to begin the winter's chopping. But they little dreamed of the ineffable calamity now only a few days in the future. My uncle James had only been chopping a few days when he was killed by a tree only a few yards from his own door. I have often seen a tear in my father's

eye, and often heard his voice falter in a moment of emotion; but never did he surrender to uncontrollable grief, save at the tragic death of his favorite brother. He was stunned and paralyzed by the stroke, and it was weeks before he recovered his normal condition. Years after, when I was a young man, as we stood on the spot where my uncle fell, my father said, in a broken voice: "Your uncle received the blow, but it was I who felt it." The night after the accident the wolves dug a hole in the ground where the neighbors buried the blood, that would have served to bury a yoke of oxen. The widow was not left destitute; she had some money, and she lived on in the house for a year, and was then married to a widower on the Sarnia road, by the name of Anthony Steel, who gave her and her children a good home. And this was the woman (my own aunt) that refused to give me my measuring chain. My father had scarcely recovered from the death of his brother and chief friend, when new trouble came in sight. In the spring he went to see Cleverly, only to learn that he had been dead two months; he then employed a lawyer to examine his papers, but not a word was found, save his application for the land in a note-book. The lawyer advised him to stay on the land, that as he had entered on the land by advice of the reputed agent he could not be ejected without compensation. He then consulted the friends he

had left, and they all gave the same advice—to stay on the land. After he had heard the views of all, he spoke to my mother something like this: "I have consulted all whose opinions seemed to be of any value, and all advise me to stay on the land, but such misfortune has attended us so far, that I am perplexed, and know not what to do, and my brain staggers under its load." To this my mother promptly replied: "Take the advice given you, George, and stay on the land; misfortune will not always follow us—it has taken a heavy toll, and will surely be soon satisfied." My mother was a vivacious and hopeful woman, and she settled the case. This spring my father logged and burned his winter's chopping—about four acres—and planted corn and potatoes of half, and sowed wheat on the other half, and got a good yield in the autumn from the virgin soil. This gave him new courage, and henceforth work was his business. As for me, I had yet about three years of child life, and then it became mine. I will now relate my first adventure in forest life; it occurred in July of the second summer of our new life in the forest. Our house stood about fifty yards from the dense forest, into which I wandered, perhaps an equal distance, and entertained myself with the birds and squirrels till I felt tired and sleepy; when I sat down between the roots of a large elm tree, and leaned back against the tree in a half-prostrate position

in the region. The Indians called him the "Big White Hunter," though he was a small man. It was from him that I learned the art; I took lessons from him in the woods, as I took lessons from my father in the field; and they were both able teachers in their specialties. It was at the village now called Clandeboye, but formerly Flanagan's Corners, that Daniel Shoff lived for more than sixty years, and where he died at the age of eighty-one years. His wife, my sister, still lives, at 86. It was from this sister, when I was about fourteen, that I received the second poetical curse of my life—a copy of Burns' poems. This book rekindled the smoldering embers left by my first book of poetry, but did not otherwise stagger me. I did not like the Doric dialect employed in many. I thought it unfit for poetry except for those who knew no other; but some of the poems gave me the highest satisfaction, and these I soon held in memory and mused on them and conned them over in my mind while at work, and wherever I went, till I began to feel as though I was on the road up Parnassus. I now began to compose, but I put little on paper, and that little was burned as soon as I re-read it; but the bulk of what I composed was never written; it was not intended to be written; but when I produced a piece that I thought better than usual, I put it on paper to see what I would think of it later; but the result was always the same for

some years. This did not discourage me in the least; it pleased me—it told me that my judgment was maturing, and ere long what I thought good at first would stay good in the opinion of its author. That time came in my twenty-second year; when I wrote the first piece that never depreciated in my own mind.

But I have yet to tell of things that betide in my early teens. I have stated that my eldest sister was married to Daniel Shoff, who was postmaster of the village of Clandeboye; he was a reader of the *Globe* from its first issue, and was widely known as a Liberal, a temperance advocate, and as a hunter, and his wife was known to the magazine men, and generally took two monthlies, and often received sample copies of others. Knowing my bent of mind, she gave me my choice of these publications after she had read them. From these magazines I sucked the venom that permeated my whole mental being. In these magazines I found highly colored panegyrics on foreign poets, chiefly dead, calling them geniuses, heaven-inspired, etc., and I often found short pieces introduced to the reader by "the following beautiful lines." These "beautiful lines" I subjected to critical analysis, taking first their sense, then rhythm, measure and rhyme, and last, the result of all; and found none above mediocrity, and some below. The analysis of these "beautiful lines" suggested to me the

question, Why shall I not write "beautiful lines"? The answer that came to this question was, "I can, and I will." I now began to compose "beautiful lines"; but it was long before I produced any with which I was satisfied.

When yet a child in life's elysian spring,
And fancy first essay'd her timid wing,
With but my mother dearer to my heart,
I nursed a nestling of poetic art;
But hardship never yet in song express'd
Expell'd the cherish'd fondling from my breast.

I here give half a dozen of my earlier efforts, that were saved more for the truth they expressed than the poetry. But the nestling, though quelled, refused to be banished, and developed into the bane of my life. I shall now pass over a number of years; these years were not spent in idleness, either of body or mind, but from the mental labor of this period no immediate results were expected. At this period, when I was seventeen, I lost the best friend that I ever had—my mother. I was her favorite, but her death made me evermore the favorite of no human heart.

When last I wrote of my father, he was in trouble about his land. After seven or eight years of labor, and anxiety touching the final result, he at last heard from the owner, and after some delay he secured the deed of his own fifty acres and

that of his dead brother—thus ended a long anxiety.

When I reached the age of twenty-five, my father died, and left me thirty-five acres of the homestead. This forced upon me the settlement of an important question, the calling of my life. This was a harder problem to solve than the "Ass's Bridge," and took me much longer. The land, nearly all cleared, would give me a good living, for much lighter labor than I was inured to, but my neighbors for life would be the boys who had been my only companions in boyhood—and I knew them well. There was no chance of ever being more than one of them by staying on the land, and as there was little risk of becoming less by leaving it, I chose the last—and never repented. I resolved to qualify for a school-teacher, and to that end I spent eighteen months in common school, like a little boy. I then went to the Normal School, but was "plucked" at the entrance examination—not for want of learning proper, but for not knowing how to conduct my examination. I spent this term in the Model School, under Mr. Carlisle, and then went up to the Normal the next term, and at the end I got a second-class certificate—good for one year only. The limitation was due to the low mark that I got as a teacher, and I did not deserve any better. But in the most difficult studies, chiefly geometry, or euclid, I was first in the

second division. I had pushed on through rudimentary matter too fast to get at the "big game," and it told against me in examinations. My first school was near Mount Brydges, and I taught it for the last half of the year—they had a teacher engaged for the next year before I took the school. My next school was in Biddulph, in the next section to the one in which the Donnelly murder was committed some ten years later. Before taking this school, as I always nursed an intense abhorrence of boarding-houses, I married, but as I would be the last man on earth who would willingly admit the public to the inner circle of his household, I will say nothing of my domestic life, save that I have no reasons but that I have just given. In the latter part of this year's teaching I had accumulated a considerable quantity of MS., and as I had no convenience for keeping loose papers, I bought a large blank book, that would contain all that I expected to write in my life. I took this book to my school, and in my spare moments I entered in it all my poems, and then thrust the loose MS. into the stove; it was a fatal deed, as I will show further on in my story. The next school I applied for was near London, and it was given to a man holding a first-class county-board certificate at a salary of nineteen dollars a month. I vowed never to apply for another school—and I never did.

I will now relate an incident that occurred a

few weeks before I was married; it may aid the reader in forming an opinion as to the kind of mortal Nature intended me to be. I went to hear a lecture on Physiognomy in London, and took with me the girl fated to be my wife. We found the hall full, save two or three seats near the door, and we got a seat there. The professor rose and introduced his subject, and after speaking for a while he paused and scanned his audience carefully for a while, and then came down from the platform, and walked down the passage, scanning the occupants of each seat, and saying as he moved on: "I want to find the best sample in this house of the sanguine temperament." When he came opposite to me, he looked at me steadily for a spell and then passed on to the other seats and looked at their occupants; he then came back to my seat, and stepping in, he laid his hand on my head, and turning to his audience, he said: "This is the man I want; he is the best sample in this audience of that temperament which is distinguished by hope, fortitude, and energy in the attainment of desired ends. He is a stranger, and of his past life I know nothing, and of his future life I say nothing; that depends on the natural bent of his mind, and the conditions and circumstances of life, and many things over which he himself may have little control. But whatever his future may be, let him not impeach Nature; she has done her share, and whatever powers and

influences may conspire against him, will have a foe worthy of their steel." Another incident, highly corroborative of the professor's opinion, occurred about thirty years later; and I may relate it when my story reaches that point. Having abandoned the pedagogic profession, I bought a village lot in Park Hill, from David Reesor, of Markham, and built on it a small store with my own hands. I stocked it, and tried my hand at store-keeping. All I shall say of it here is that I wasted too much time then, not to say money, to waste any more in telling about it. But through good and evil fortune (the "good" is used for euphony) I kept adding to my stock of MS., and was always in communication with some of the magazines that publish "beautiful lines."

My next enterprise was in company with a brother-in-law to start a shingle mill on the river Aux Sable, four miles below the old Brewster mill. My part in this venture was to run the mill as if my own, and his was to furnish the machinery, and send in supplies from Park Hill, and keep account of the same. As I had no experience in this kind of work we engaged two men who claimed to be experts, but for six months we had little success, and much good timber was wasted; but I was watching and learning, and at the end of that time I discharged these men, and became sawyer, engineer and

general manager, and from this time the mill began to hum. I kept a man to feed the furnace with sawdust and keep me informed about the water in the taps and glass, and his duties ended there. I soon learned that the uniform murmur of machinery (at least in my case) is not antagonistic to poetic impulse; for the music of the saw and the hum of the high-speeded edger and transmitters, became my inspiration, and many short poems came to me unpremeditated while swinging the pendulum that carried the block. These pieces were generally begun and finished under one impulse, and were uniform in quality, and were the best of my emotional productions. Of the first four years in the shingle mill, there is little to be said of my literary life, save that they were sufficiently fertile to suggest publication in another year. But now came an event so suddenly, unexpected, and stunning in its effect, that few men ever confront its equal. What is called sawdust in a shingle mill consists of long fibres that fall from the saw in coils; and after getting a few hours' sun or wind is highly inflammable. This was used for fuel, but not all; there was a surplus of half a dozen barrow loads, more or less, every day, and this we dumped into the river, till I got notice from a local authority to desist. I at once obeyed, and, choosing a low spot at a safe distance from the mill, I told the fireman to dump the surplus there, and I would attend to

the burning of it myself. On a Friday in the latter part of May, when the heap had got bigger than usual, I burned it; the next day the usual surplus was dumped on the ashes. The next day being Sunday, most of my men had gone home, and the rest were in their bunks. There is no "lady in the case," but there is a dog, and I must tell his role in this drama of fate: He was about the size of a large rat, and for several months gave signs of having entered on the last stage of dog life. It disappeared in the middle of the week, and I found it by chance Saturday evening curled up in a cluster of bushes behind the mill. It was dying of age; and after taking it some milk, which it only tasted, I left it. As I never had dog-on-the-brain, and as this one had evidently enjoyed its full term of years, I felt little concern about it, and it passed from my mind. The next morning, Sunday, after breakfast, wishing to look over a late entry, and wishing to be alone in such cases, I took my big book that held the work of the best sixteen years of my life, and, going to the heap of clean, elastic fibres, I threw myself thereon and opened my book. Just at this moment I bethought me of the little dog, and dropping the open book on the heap of fibres, I went to see it, and found it dead. I got a spade in the engine-room and buried it, the spot being the bank of the little bay or cove in which I kept my stock of logs boomed. I stood for perhaps

fifteen minutes estimating my timber on hand, and then returned to the mill, where I spent a few minutes more looking over the belts and other things as any man would do who had a mill on his hands. I then passed out, and looked over to my book, but instead of seeing a heap of white fibres, I saw a bed of glowing cinders; I snatched the fireman's fork and ran—but too late! My book was ashes. The cause of this accident was, no doubt, that there was fire smoldering under the ashes of the last burn, and my lying down and rising had disturbed the ashes and let in the air—there is no other explanation. The reader may wonder how I felt. I cannot tell him, any more than I can reveal the mysteries of Hell. I was in the best of health and the highest of spirits; it was long before I recovered the first, and I never fully regained the last. No man ever escaped a madhouse by a closer margin. From fifteen years of age, every month of my life yielded less or more poetry of some quality; but for six months following this event the Muse was dumb, but at last broke her long silence in these lines, which are somewhat boastful, but exaggeration in poetry is like whiskey in an Indian, "A little too much is just enough":

> Thou hast, O Fate! by milder stroke
> Than that which thou hast dealt to me,
> Heroic spirits bow'd and broke;

But mine survives thy harsh decree;
And waits unquell'd for what may be;
Secure, that thou hast not in store,
Of any shape, a cruelty
That can outdevil that I bore:
Nor I for mercy to thy throne implore.

Fate took heavy toll for this bit of bombast, and did not wait long either, and fire was his instrument again. Soon after I had regained a business frame of mind, I bought out my partner, on favorable terms—to pay him in shingles, and when I had large stock on hand. Before this mill was started I secured a timber right of my own, of fifty acres of the finest cedar I ever saw. The summer of 1865 was the driest in my recollection; the earth was baked two feet, and the spongy soil of cedar swamps was baked below the roots of the trees. In this autumn the fire got into this swamp and burned the soil from the roots of the timber; and when the fall winds came they fell, and were in that state when I secured the right. But they were no worse for being down, except that they were in greater danger from fire, but the swamp was too wet in common seasons for the danger to be great. But the next summer after I had taken over the mill was a very dry one, and as the timber was down it was in great peril; for I knew I had enemies who envied me this timber, which they might have had if they had

forestalled me in application to the Canada Company. About the middle of October, when the danger was nearly over, and I was more at ease, the dreaded match was applied; and in twenty-four hours this timber for which one thousand dollars would have been no temptation, was reduced to its original elements. The prosaic mind will think this blow far greater than the first, but it was not a prosaic mind on which they fell. It was possible for this loss to be compensated by better fortune at some time; but the loss of my book—never! I will now depart from my theme for a while, to relate an incident that is sufficiently rare to justify the digression. I got a note from my brother-in-law, D. Shoff, stating that he was coming to have a night spearing fish on the river, and told me to have a good supply of pitch-pine for light. The next day was Sunday (the only time I could spare), and I went into the woods to look for some; I found a white pine stub, about eight feet high, and finding it loose, I applied force and uprooted it. Looking into the cavity, I saw something like turtle eggs half covered with sand; stooping and removing the loose sand, I found the supposed eggs to be Indian arrow points and spear points, of a rich cream-colored flint. I got a spade and a pail, and first removed the sand round the heap and found it a cone a foot in diameter of base, and a foot high, and had been built with care like dry masonry.

The cone had been started by sticking a large spear point in the sand, point down, and then building round it till the surface became even with the top of the spear; and then another large one was set up and built round as the first was, and then a third was set up, with which the cone was finished. The small flints were placed round the centre one in any way that they would best fit; but the outer surface consisted of regular tiers, each tier of points of equal size as near as possible —the large points being used in the lower tiers, and with the biting end inward.

I examined the structure of this cone of flints with the utmost care, to decide, if possible, whether the hand of man had built it under the tree, or the hand of Nature had placed the tree over it; the only conclusion to which I could arrive, was that such a structure could not be built under the tripodic roots of a tree, and that the flints were buried on open ground, and, perhaps, a pine shrub planted over them to mark the spot. The flints filled a common pail, level, and were a full peck or more. I took them home and put them in a bag, and put the bag in an empty barrel that stood in a corner of a lean-to, store-house, attached to my house. It was not possible for me to bring these things home and keep them without telling someone, so I told Mrs. Summerss and her brother, who was one of my men, and warned them to say nothing to any

person; for if the men got to know they would all want samples, and I would not break bulk even for myself, as I had already devoted them to some historical society or institution that prized such things. I soon learned that if a man has a secret that he wishes to be kept he should do all the keeping himself if possible; my men got to know, and, as I foresaw, wanted some, but I would not give even one. My brain being loaded to its capacity with business and what I will call at present poetic trumpery, I had no time to think of the flints save to know that I had them. About three months after making the deposit in the barrel, I looked into it for the first time and found an empty bag—not a point in it; they had been stolen by handfuls; and, probably, by every man in the mill. There are some people who, on being told a secret, immediately feel an itching to tell it; and such was the man who betrayed me. It was unfortunate that Mr. Shoff did not come to have his spell fishing; for I should have sent them home with him in his buggy to wait my disposal of them. The finding of these points occurred about a year before the burning of my book, and should have been told sooner in my story. So ends my tale. The burning of my timber was the beginning of the end of my business career. After the fire I went over the ground, and estimated the timber left—and I was no novice in that work. With timber left, and

what I could buy from farmers round, I judged would keep the mill running for eighteen months or two years. My timber at the old stand was nearly done, and as soon as it was done I moved the mill to the swamp at no little cost. A set of new buildings had to be built, and though of a cheap kind, I felt their cost, but when winter came I was ready to make the mill hum. But misfortune was not yet satisfied, and prepared to crush me. Without snow the farmer could not come for shingles; and without frost to freeze the swamp I could not get timber out, and that winter there was neither frost nor snow enough to meet my need, and ruin was the result. The closing scenes of this drama were too full of bitterness to me to dwell on them in detail; and I will now introduce myself to the reader as the engineer of the "Ætna Mills," of Park Hill. The engine-room of this mill was low and dirty, and flooded in wet weather, and contained no poetry but what was in me; soap could be made from its ashes; but there was nothing from which poetry could be wrung; but here I wrote a large part of this book —chiefly my longest poem, "The Pioneer of Ontario." Before leaving the mill I had recovered about a dozen short pieces of my burnt book from memory; and the first thing I did in my new situation was to try to make use of some fragments of burnt poems that I remembered; and from these I patched up a poem called "A

Reverie." The parts were better than the whole is, and they cost more in fitting them than the result is worth. I never liked it, but I do not blush for it. I made no further effort to use fragments; but when chance gave me an opportunity I used it. In my new situation I had no sorrows that were heavy, but I brought with me, in memories of the past, sufficient to save me from excessive happiness for a long period. I served in this mill for a term of ten years and two months, and during that time was absent from my post (for all causes) only five days. For the first six years my salary was $7.50 a week, but the price of flour falling, it fell also to $6. Pray do not judge my poetry by my salary, except in inverse ratio. After the loss of my book, poetry that had been a passion and a pleasure became a solace—and did its duty well, and often made the dirty engine-room a Parnassian hostelry. It was here that I wrote "The Pioneer." After serving this firm for the time stated it failed, and I was out of steady employment for three years; and for the first in my life I felt poor; for I was poor indeed.

Through a combination of circumstances and events, each of which was of little importance in itself, the family assembled in Toronto in 1889. This was well for all the family save myself; I could get no work of any kind, the demand was for young men, and my young days were past. I saw an advertisement for a second-engineer in

the power-house of the North Toronto Electric Railway, "apply at power-house." I did so and was told by the man that he could not engage me for reason of my age; but he said I might see the president, and he might take me. I called at the office the man named, and found a man at a desk, to whom I said: I presume you are Mr. Warren (I think that was the name); without heeding my question, he said rudely: "What do you want?" I told him and he replied with the fury of a lynx: "We have had trouble enough with old fellows, and we don't intend to have any more." I was stunned for a few seconds, and then said: "Sir, if age brings the unworthiness that your conduct implies, you cannot be offended with me, if I tell you that I hope you may never be twenty-four hours older." My seriousness gave my voice a prophetic tone, and it was his turn to be stunned, and I think he did not fully recover till the twenty-four hours were past. I thought after leaving him, and I think still, that if I had stayed to parley with him, I would have got the situation. Soon after this, Mr. Wills, engineer of the custom house, and president of a society of engineers authorized to grant certificates, announced in the papers that an examination would be held on a certain evening in a room near the custom house, and invited all applicants to attend. When the evening came, sixteen presented themselves, and among them, "Satan came also," in the disguise

of a stranger. After we were seated round a long table, and our papers were served out and we had begun to write, Mr. Wills walked round the table and looked at one and then another, over their shoulders, but said nothing to any till he came to me, and then he leaned over and whispered, "Keep cool, we have plenty of time." I was astonished, for I was quite at ease, and I wondered why he whispered these words to me, and said nothing to the other fifteen. This evening led to my acquaintance with Mr. Wills, and we were friends up to his death; and one day while having a chat with him in his own house, some reference was made to the examination, and I said: "What prompted you to whisper to me to keep cool? Did you see any signs of agitation in me?" He replied laughing: "O no, but I saw the powder and I wanted to ward off the spark." After a pause he added: "I have been through a few examinations myself, and I always had to know about thirty per cent. more on any subject than other men, to make an equal showing, and I took you for one of the same class as soon as I saw you." This is the incident to which I referred just after relating that of the professor of physiognomy in London. The years I spent in Toronto have not been fertile in poetry, and one reason is, doubtless, age; but there are others—the scenes of city life antagonize poetic emotion, the advertising placards which are either lies or great

exaggerations, and the grotesque and vulgar pictures that are seen all over the city, are a disgrace to it, and brand the city council as men of vulgar minds. There is at this moment on Queen Street, in several places, a plaster cast of a human head, with big, open mouth and grinning teeth; this repellant spectacle is intended to please the passing people and lure them into the shop before which it stands. The persons who are responsible for this death's head are either of a very coarse nature, or they believe the coarse element of the crowd is worth more to them than those of such sensibility as the spectacle would offend—else it would not be there.

My story is about told, but I will take a run over the field of my experience with magazine and newspaper men. In this, I will be brief. I first invited the severest criticism; but not a word could I wring from any of them; then I came down to begging for it; but that was equally barren of results. I then challenged and dared them to assault me with their biggest guns; but all in vain—yet every issue of their magazines had the usual budget of panegyrics of poets and "beautiful lines," but nothing for me. Were I a believer in curses as some are, I would leave them one that would keep them warm through a long eternity. Of the publishers of whom I have just written, there is one, and one only, that I would exempt. His name was Gahan (if I spell it rightly), and he

was editor of a newspaper in London, now extinct. I sent him four short poems and asked him to review them. He replied at once that he would do so as soon as he could. About a month later his review was published; he said all that I could wish, and much more than I expected, and closed by challenging contradiction, and adding that the world would yet know more of their author. This was from a stranger—we never met. When this review appeared, my friends (so called) gathered round me, as though just taken under the wings of Fame; but when no seconder appeared in the other papers, they soon fell away from me, and left me to wander, figuratively, in the glacial wilds of obscurity. I have seen it stated several times in late years that poetry is on the decline. If this be true, it is because man is losing the sense of, and susceptibility to, the lofty and sublime; and when this loss is complete, man, in common with all animals, will foster only the instinct and cunning necessary for his corporal existence, and the question of the "missing link" will be solved by the closing of the gap. I will now close this story of my life with a few lines of advice to young aspirants, born and to be born. And chiefly I warn him against being lured by the publications of the age. When the magazine writer tells him to "aim high" and "look aloft," let him bear in mind that the writer is only trying to get up a readable magazine article, and

his sympathy for the young aspirants of the period is that of a hawk for a brood of young chickens. Patriotism applied to literature has no existence in Canada; and while the cry of Canada! Canada! Canada! is loud enough, and while "Made in Canada" is a badge of merit to all other things, it is the insignia of shame to poetry; yet there is nothing that comes from afar too paltry to find space in all the publications of the much lauded Canada. When the Queen's son-in-law came here as governor, he sent before him (or permitted to be sent) a quantity of his poetry, which was published throughout the continent; his poetry consisted of cold, commonplace, every-day thoughts, done up in hammer-and-tongs verse; and not a line suggested anything that would bear the name of emotion. The fawning over foreign poets, and the lauding of their "beautiful lines" did much to lure me along the path that led me to all the sorrows that man ever endured. I have scanned the catalogue of human woes in vain to find one that was new to me—save only ill-health.

GEO. SUMMERSS.

And thou, sweet poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade,
Unfit in these degenerate times of shame
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame—
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride—
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so.

—GOLDSMITH.

OUR TRYSTING PLACES—1856

Yes, if remembrance can survive
That fateful hour that must arrive,
This rolling sphere around the sun
Shall cease its annual course to run,
Ere memory ceases to retrace
Our steps to every sacred place:
Remembrance scorns thy lethean powers,
O Time! though ages stand for hours!

The eight lines above are a reply to a request for a few lines on the subject, by a young girl whom it was my wont to meet occasionally. They were written in the first summer of my manhood; and are the first of my poetry that never depreciated in my own mind after my first estimate. They were composed, or rather came to me, while returning from a walk in the woods, with the visible embodiment of inspiration by my side.

OBSEQUIES

Of Miss E. Summerss, teacher in Toronto for twelve years who died August 4th, 1907, and whose body was cremated and her ashes scattered by her father, as she requested.

Daughter, for whom the private tear
Will ever start when none are near;
And unrestrained by effort high
Would leave the pearly fountain dry:
If sparely wept by colder friends,
For these thy father makes amends.
The last condition of thy will,
With bleeding heart, I now fulfil,
And scatter with a trembling hand
Thine ashes on our native land;
And on the highest copse-clad mound
Within Toronto's northern bound:
And O, may Phœbus ever shed
His beams on thy eternal bed!
Where soon (to intermix with thine)
Some other hand will scatter mine.

"Thanks, father, thanks," the Spirit said,
New from the dust my hand had spread,
Thou hast unique atonement made
For Nature's debt untimely paid:
While sunbeams on this summit gleam,
Shall zephyrs murmur thy requiem.

MY FOREST HOME OF CHILDHOOD

Thy forest, Windsor, and thy green retreats,
At once the monarch's and the muse's seat.
—*Pope.*

Nor muse nor monarch's seat, nor storied halls
Knew that wild forest that my boyhood knew:
The pioneer's log house, with bark-clad walls,
Was most magnificent, and they were few.

Such was our forest home—my mother dear
Again in memory sweeps its spacious hearth;
My father, wearied with his toils severe,
Rebukes his noisy children's evening mirth.

Or in a martial mood, I hear him tell
Of famous Waterloo, or Trafalgar,
Or how the victor and the vanquished fell,
Wolfe and Montcalm, or other scenes of war.

'Twas winter when we entered this abode,
And thither we were borne upon a sled

Drawn by a yoke of oxen, and the road
Was where our father's pilot footsteps led.

The heavy beasts, laborious and slow,
Floundered along on the untrodden way,
Half swimming through the deep, new-fallen snow
O'er which they bore us on the floating sleigh.

Onward they toil'd, and when the queen of night
Assumed the late dominion of the sun,
We had assembled round the fire bright,
And a new era in our lives begun.

Deep in the forest axe had never scarr'd
Save to erect a home, we play'd and slept;
The giant timber o'er our slumbers warr'd
With the wild elements that o'er us swept.

Secure in helpless innocence, we knew
No anxious fears that evil would betide:
Death comes not often where his prey are few,
Nor were we conscious yet that children died.

O happy time! that vanished all too soon,
When we supposed that we would always be!
When care was yet in embryo, or the moon,
And death a fabled monster of the sea!

Our father's arm was strong, and strong his will
To wield its strength, though skill'd in arts of school;

His axe resounds in wistful memory still,
And still his voice expounds the "Golden Rule."

And soon the trees that o'er our dwelling tower'd
Fell by the blade that forest heroes wield;
The cabin, erst their spreading arms embower'd.
Was soon the centre of a brushy field.

However cold the morning, when it broke
Our father's axe was heard upon the tree:
The frost-bound forests waft afar his stroke,
The morning herald of industry.

Spring came—the trees put on their green attire;
The exiled songsters of the woods returned—
Our little fields were cleared by aid of fire,
The logs and brush, and all but stumps were burned.

Corn and potatoes in the virgin soil
We planted then, and made a garden rude;
And Nature, bounteous to the sons of toil,
Returned a grateful yield for winter food.

And as the sunny summer rolled away,
We gamboll'd in the margin of the wild;
And new-born joys were added every day
To the unnumbered pleasures of a child.

---

*My elder brother and I.

We watched the little birdies as they flew
From tree to tree, and sang their native lays;
And as familiar with their kinds we grew,
We gave them names suggested by their ways.

Bird-of-the-bush was one that never came
Within the field, as some were wont to do;
It shunn'd the path of man, and hence the name—
O that I were a bird to shun it too!

The robins built their nests upon the fence,
And though we never sought them to molest,
Our frequent visitations gave offence,
Too late revealed by the forsaken nest.

We often wondered how they had been taught
To build such pretty nests of moss and clay;
And many an hour in mud and moss we wrought
In vain, to build as good a nest as they.

And now and then the role of brave we play'd
With bow and arrow, tomahawk and knife,
In paint and mimic toggery array'd
We sallied forth to visionary strife.

We scalped the mossy trees for fallen foes,
And at our waists the mossy scalps we hung;
And with the trophies of our dexterous blows
Suspended thus, we whooped and danced and sung.

Another winter came—another field
By force of arms was from the forest won;
And when another spring the earth revealed,
The clearing process was again begun.

And we assisted in the busy spell;
We gathered chips and set the brush on fire;
And this was work, but it was play as well,
Till we were sated, and began to tire.

But when the play-work could no longer bear
The double name beneath the torrid sun,
We were respited to the shade, and there,
"Babes in the Wood," asleep, we play'd till noon.

And after dinner and its hour of rest,
Our father, needful of our mite of aid,
With lavish praise revived our morning zest,
And we returned like men for service paid.

But when the forest donn'd its summer guise,
Again in rapture to its shades we flew;
And as in forest craft we grew more wise,
The circuit of our rambles wider grew.

We kept our latitude by certain trees,
Known by unwonted attributes possess'd,
That we had seen before and noted—these
Relieved the 'wildering sameness of the rest.

And when another autumn strew'd the ground
With faded foliage, we had far explored
The woody wild that girted us around,
And nuts, and grapes, and plums in plenty stored.

Another winter came—another field,
By force of arms was from the forest won;
And we thus early were employed to wield
Auxiliary steel; and life's long task begun.

For implements of labor, we resigned
Our bow and arrows and our fishing gear;
But to the "gentle craft" we still inclined,
And were indulged with two half-days a year.

The first was after hoeing of the corn,
And just before we harvested the hay;
The other after all the fields were shorn,
And all their produce safely stow'd away.

Nor other sport than this we ever knew:
To unrespited toil we grew resigned;
And year by year our fields in number grew,
And we in stature, but untutored mind.

Thus passed our days, in labor to obtain
Wherewith to live—an all-engrossing theme;
Life seem'd commissioned only to sustain
Its barren self, without a higher dream.

But in my bosom lurked a secret flame,
A weed spontaneous in congenial soil,
A thirst for something undefined by name,
Some higher summit to be scaled by toil.

At times it slumbered, but anon awoke
To life, intensified by its repose;
Unwonted visions on my fancy broke,
And stately "castles in the air" arose.

But, not unlike a nursling of the grove,
To graminivorous ravishers a prey,
'Gainst unpropitious tendencies it strove,
Through years of blighting toil, then pined away.

THE PHANTOM OF THE SEA

A ship, whose name had faded from the earth,
When Noah's mother gave the captain birth,
Sailed from a port of which there's nothing known
To one whose name has perished with her own.
Nor can I sing her captain's name and race;
These too have perished in the lapse of space.
Nor does tradition tell that boist'rous gales
Or gentle breezes filled her snowy sails
Along her famous trip; but as she near'd
The nameless haven unto which she steer'd,
The heavens frown'd, and a terrific storm
Burst with dread fury on her staggering form.

Though shapely in her mould, and buoyant too,
(Perhaps of cedar that on Leb'non grew,
She was constructed, or of gopher wood—
For ships were built of such before the flood)
She could not in that dreadful sea obey
Her helm, and drifted from her course away.
Her stern commander, resolute to gain
The 'foresaid haven, strove with might and main;
But as expedients failed he grew enraged,
And, sailor-like, his ruffled sea assuaged
By wonted blasphemy, and loudly swore
By the Commander of both sea and shore
That ere his watch another hour could tell,
His ship should be in port, or he in Hell!
Another moment, hurried to the vast,
Insatiate abyss of moments past,
Had scarcely been, when lo! a voice on high
Pronounced this judgment, issued from the sky:—
"This ship is doomed immutable; and they
Who are on board shall there forever stay;
They all shall die; for every mortal must;
But never shall again return to dust:
They shall at once arise, though wan and pale,
And phantom-like, to wield the wonted sail.
Material cable shall no more restrain
This ship, nor she arrive in port again;
The pole no longer shall her magnet sway,
Her destiny alone shall point her way;
And she shall ever seek, where tempests roar,
With speed that never ship attained before.

A dreaded omen of disaster she
Shall be to all—the Phantom of the Sea."
Thus was she doomed, and her astonished crew,
Benumbed with terror, knew not what to do.
But now her destiny assumed command,
And he that speechless stood with helm in hand,
Steered for the foamy vast; and soon the shore
Faded forever from the crew she bore.
He whose command 'twas death to disobey
An hour ago, was now as weak as they
Who had so lately feared him; and they would
Have cast him headlong in the boiling flood—
The fate of Jonah surely had been played,
A shark performing what the whale was said
To have performed; and all had been as plain
As truth, except disgorging him again.
But they had heard the dread avenger say,
"Who are on board shall there forever stay,"
And dared not move to counteract his will,
For fear of being punished further still.
Thus he escaped the vengeance of his crew
That he had lorded, and on whom he drew
The wrath of Heaven—but we may assume
That each was worthy of the common doom.
Their sempeternal voyage now begun,
They with chronometers and charts were done;
The sun's meridian altitude, that so
Essential was, they sought no more to know;
Their latitude, and longitude were hence
A computation of Omnipotence.

The warring elements that wonted erst
To daunt the bravest, now might do their worst;
They feared no more the fury of the blast
To rend the sail or snap the bending mast.
Their ship was now insured 'gainst wind and tide,
And time's disorganizing touch beside;
And they, her crew, were co-eternal; Death
Was but a moment of suspended breath,
From which they would regenerate arise
And co-exist in that eternal guise.
What common or uncommon scenes betide
On board the fated ship before they died?
When did they die? and which of them was first
To drain the mortal cup and know the worst?
When the defunct arose to join the corps
From which he had been called not long before,
What were the feelings that their looks express'd?
With what emotion heaved each mortal breast?
Did some inertly stare, and some appall'd,
Rush from the presence of the dead recall'd?
Or had anticipation of the scene
Made it less fearful than it would have been
To ordinary mortals? Were they fed
As were the Israelites? or had they bread
Enough in cargo? These are all unknown
Save to Infinite Knowledge and their own.
Suffice to know they died within the span
Of time allotted to the creature Man.
Death came at times, till all on board had paid
The common tribute on transgression laid;

But for his spoils the shark pursued in vain,
For as he cut them down they rose again.
They rose in the same flesh and the same heart
That in the mortal breast had played its part,
Revived upon a self-sustaining plan
As first it beat within the first of man;
But to the image of their God they bear
No other semblance faint; their features wear
The mortal agony, remorse and woe,
When Nature yielded to the conquering foe.
Since that ill-fated voyage long ago;—
Ask not how long, for they are not that know
When from the angry skies the fiat came
That sealed her doom, and thence deduce her name—
Till now, the "Phantom of the Sea" has been
A bird of tempest, but in tempest seen.
Just as the cuckoo on her joyous wing
Pursues the footsteps of rejoicing Spring,
She in her one, immutable array
Pursues where tempest leads the stormy way.
"Whence comest thou, and to what haven bound?"
Has often hailed her; but no other sound
Than of the waves recoiling from her side,
To that interrogation yet replied.
But not unconsciously inert they stand,
Like statues graven by the sculptor's hand;
Their solemn gestures frequently display
The conscious tenant of the ghastly clay.

Why do they not make answer? they have
tongues—
Tongues of immortal flesh, and equal lungs?
'Twas a blasphemous tongue that erst provoked
The wrath of Heaven, and their doom invoked,
And from that data we may predicate
Eternal silence added to their fate.
Of all unwelcome omens of the sea,
She is the Empress—none so dread as she:
At her appearance apprehension takes
Possession of the bold; the bravest quakes;
And when in latitudes where storms prevail
The watch on high descries a distant sail,
A secret dread announces it to be
The sea-doomed herald of catastrophe.

PART SECOND

"I saw her once," a hoary seaman said,
And drew a long, long breath, and shook his head;
"A dreadful day—the roughest of the three—
The last that ever dawned on all but me,
Was drawing to a close, and anxious eyes
Surveyed alternately the sea and skies;
But none were more than anxious, for they knew
The ship was ably manned and nearly new.
I'd just resigned the helm to Albert Style,
And sought my hammock to repose awhile;
But some unwonted feelings in my breast
Denied my body more than wakeful rest;
And as I lay, the simultaneous cry

'A ship! a ship!' announced her very nigh;
And ere I'd time to move the captain roar'd,
'Starboard the helm—she's coming right on board!'
As from her nest the frightened swallow starts,
And through the broken pane impetuous darts,
So from my hammock through the hatch I flew,
Impell'd by fear that what I heard was true.
But when I reached the deck, the sudden fright
As soon abated when a second sight
Reveal'd the stranger veering off our track;
And we were also on the contra tack.
A moment more and we were side by side,
Their gunwales distant less than half a stride,
While we were drenched by the descending spray
Shot by her prow that cleaved her billowy way.
The captain with intent to ask her name,
The port to which she sailed and whence she came,
Had rais'd his trumpet, but he paused—he gazed—
He shudder'd, dropp'd it, and exclaimed, amazed:
'Zounds, it's the Phantom!' and his martial air
Was gone—the captain was no longer there.
But other eyes were on the stranger too;
All saw and felt the same astounding view—
All recognized her, and the sudden fear
That an eventful night, and death, were near,
Struck every seaman's features with a hue
That spoke him kinsman of her ghastly crew.
Swift as an eagle in the pathless sky
Shoots from a point, the phantom darted by,

Nor gave a sign of what was to befall,
More than her near approach applies to all;
And with all eyes upon her (every look
Was but another copy of the book
Of fear and awe) she vanished in the gloom,
Leaving the fated to prepare for doom.
They gazed as long as her wide sails and white
Prolonged her fading image yet in sight:
Some longer gazed, and others turned away;
Some crossed themselves; two only knelt to pray.
Nothing occurred to add to our alarm,
Or quell our fear of Fate's uplifted arm,
Till after midnight, when the storm grew more
Intensely wild than it had been before;
Electric fulminations rent the sky
In quick succession, culminating nigh;
O what an hour of tempest was the last
Through which the hapless *Mermaid* ever pass'd!
The ocean roll'd amain, the tempest blew,
The thunder crash'd, the wicked lightning flew!
Athwart the heavens shot the shafts of light,
Abrupt and strong, and stunn'd the sense of sight!
A feeble hope that Fate might yet recall
His cruel mandate, had been felt by all;
But no one yet indulged the feeble ray,
For with the helm it now was swept away:
And now abandoned by the latest hope
They stood, like felons, in adjusted rope;
But short was their suspense; there came a flash,

A dazzling blaze and an appalling crash,
And some fell senseless through the broken deck
Of a dismantled hulk and floundering wreck;
While standing on their feet remained but few,
And they with consciousness suspended too.
The stricken *Mermaid*, like a stricken deer,
Gave a convulsive bound and sudden veer,
And falling in the trough, the sea swept o'er
Her shatter'd deck, to hide it evermore.
Expert in water, I resolved the sun
Should rise again before my course was run;
And with a broken deck plank at my side,
Lashed to my waist, I launch'd upon the tide.
It might be fancied that the storm was plann'd
By th' Oceanic God, or his command,
With our destruction for the closing scene,
To please his goddess or a wanton queen;
For soon as that was wrought, the storm was o'er,
The thunder crashed, and tempest blew no more:
The waves roll'd sluggishly against their will,
And struggled with each other to be still;
And one brief hour beheld the angry tide
To my advantage strangely modified;
And told the wanderer of the stormy sea,
A breathless calm was Neptune's next decree.
'While there is life there's hope,' is better said
Upon the ocean than upon the bed;
For when my substitution for a boat
Was all that kept my body still afloat—

When sight had failed the eye and sense the brain
To recognize a ship, or search in vain,
And life had dwindled to a beating heart,
And that about to cease—the *Rescue* came."

EPITAPH

ON A WELL-KNOWN MONEY LENDER OF LONDON

Being in want of money to attend the Normal School, and holding a mortgage on fifty acres of our old homestead for the sum of five hundred dollars, just one-fourth of the sum for which it was sold, and on which there was no other encumbrance, I applied to this man to negotiate the mortgage, which bore six per cent. interest and was payable in three equal annual instalments, and of which time nine months had expired. After hearing a statement of my need, and the particulars of my claim, he told me to bring him an abstract of the title, and if satisfactory he would give me fifty per cent. of the face of the mortgage. I was too indignant to reply, and quit his office immediately. I walked over to the market, near by, and sitting on the beam of a sample plow left on view on the corner of the market square, I composed the first six lines, and the rest was composed as I rode home. It was simply an outlet for my just indignation. I put it on paper the next day and laid it away, and thought little more of it till I resolved to publish, and then I called it forth. It may in some meas-

ure show that a rich man cannot always with safety put his foot on the neck of the poor.

What means this grassy mound; know, stranger, would you?
It hides the mortal dust of J. G. Goodhue,
Which here as worthless residue was laid
When Hell's old claim, long overdue, was paid.
Such was his heart, he never felt he had one,
Save when he shaved a note that proved a bad one.
His name is a memorial of woes
That Vengeance's self might shudder to impose
On their own minister. To many a yeoman,
Who first met ruin under that cognomen,
With what significance it strikes his ear!
Think how the war-whoop thrills the pioneer,
Whose helpless little ones and fenceless wife
Fall by the mangling tomahawk and knife.
A needy yeoman at the awful throne
Of Mammon kneels to supplicate a loan.
What unpropitious causes culminated
In his appeal, is first interrogated,
And all that appertains to his estate,
To know the fish is worthy of the bait,
And thence deduce the magnitude of onus
His shoulders can sustain in shape of bonus;
Next the security: if note of hand—
"How many farmers' names can you command?"
If all are owners of estate, a few

(I love to aid the honest poor) will do;
And, for their benefit, I always take
My bonus in advance; it tends to make
The final payment easy: it will be
A pleasing thing, when it is due, to see
(The heart, however sad, will be elated)
One-half the debt already liquidated.

THE TEA PARTY

Mrs. A, Mrs. B, Mrs. C, Mrs. D,
Are invited to tea by their friend Mrs. E.
Discoursing an hour of this and of that,
There came a brief pause in the gossiping chat
Which furnished the chance she desired, for A
To complain that her John came home tipsy to-day;
And declare that his cruelty certainly would
Have shattered her reason if anything could.
Then spoke Mrs. B, who was very well known
As the shield of all husbands on earth but her own:
"You really confound me, my dear Mrs. A,
I can't, won't believe that you mean what you say;
That your husband has faults, I indulge not a doubt,
(Can you find such a thing as a husband without?)
But I've known Mr. A since my earliest years,
And though man is not always just what he appears,

I feel I have very good reason to say,
Or think it at least, that you wrong Mr. A.
When you married, your friends and acquaintances thought
You had done (no offence) quite as well as you ought;
And could we trade husbands like secrets, you know,
I would give you a chance to give trouble for woe."
Then spoke Mrs. C in a similar strain,
She fancied that neither had cause to complain,
But thought all the woes that belong to the state
Were combined in her single, exceptional fate.
Then spoke Mrs. D, in a tone that confess'd
How deeply she mourned the sad fate of the rest:
"Blest in a companion devoted and kind,
And gifted with more than an average mind;
And what to a woman is dearer than life,
Who vows himself equally blest in his wife.
Your sorrow, my sisters, I cannot but share,
Having none of my own that are heavy to bear;
You are much to be pitied; I grieve to confess,
In the grave I would certainly pity you less—
Far better you all had been laid in your graves
Than wed to these villains who treat you as slaves."
With eyes upon D, and with fury aglow,
Like a park of artillery assaulting the foe:
"What! villains and slaves!" shouted A, B and C;
"My stars! O, the hussy!" continued the three;

"Who sued for your sympathy, madame, or who
Would add to their sorrow the pity of you?
That paragon husband in whom you rejoice
Betrayed a low taste when he made you his choice.
And D, what is he?" (to each other appealing)
"His brother's wife's cousin was suspected of stealing;
Last winter his note in the blank was protested,
For you know how we quizz'd her until she confess'd it;
His horse has the heaves, that's known all around,
And it's only a month since his cow was in pound;
And see him in church, in the habit he wore
Last summer and part of the summer before;
And, who would believe it? as dignified too
As these 'villains' of ours would be in their new.
And, add to all these what we would not have hinted,
But the fact of it is, it had ought to be printed,
He has some queer disorder he fain would conceal,
Who knows but a plague like what Christ used to heal?
For we heard Dr. Mathewson ask Parson Hughes
If he knew that her man had the hotrodox-blues."*
But now speaks the hostess: "The rights of our sex

*Heterodox views.

Is a problem that long has been known to perplex;
Some grant us electoral franchise, and claim
That the rights of the husband and wife are the same;
While others affirm we were never designed
By nature to cope with the masculine mind;
But, whatever the issue may be, let us cleave
To the rights we inherit as daughters of Eve.
Of these I will only allude to the chief,
Designed to afford our pent feelings relief,
The right that we women possess to defame
Our husbands at will, spite of honor and shame;
But this little truth to our credit be said,
We brook for each other nor pity nor aid."

TO JOSEPHINE IN HEAVEN

A SONG

We sat on the bank of the Wisconsin River,
On a high frowning bluff that hangs over the stream;
Could the rapturous spell have continued forever,
I had sung an adieu to futurity's dream.

And now were it thus that a wish could endow me
A ravishing scene of the past to restore,
Should all, except Heaven and thee, disavow me,
I would meet thee again on that wild, rocky shore.

So fain to my bosom again would I press thee,
As wont, in impassion'd embrace of my arms,
I frequently thus in my slumber caress thee,
And dream of thy bosom-awakening charms.

So falsely has Fortune caress'd to deceive me,
So brilliant the dawn of love's mutable day,
The most she can give is the least she can leave me,
Remembrance of what she has taken away.

LAMENT

The cares of life can never come
Where life is not;
Be then the refuge of the tomb
My welcome lot.

The nectar brew'd for youth to sup
Ne'er wet my lip:
Fate mix'd a vile terrestrial cup
For mine to sip.

My heart in boyhood's early years
Was crush'd with toil;
My young hands till'd, my sweat and tears
Bedew'd the soil.

Childhood was all the youth for me
That Fate design'd;
And youth is age—infirmity
Of limbs and mind.

Love came, and its enchanting beam
Illum'd my way;
But like a sweet, delicious dream
It pass'd away.

Love cannot brook the storms that sweep
O'er life's bleak plain;
The gentle flower can only peep
And fade again.

DIALOGUE

BETWEEN AN AMERICAN REFUGEE OF THE CIVIL WAR AND A CANADIAN

CANADIAN—

We wonder not a little to behold
The daring progeny of dauntless heroes,
Who fought at Lexington and Bunker's Hill,
Fleeing from civil discord to our land
To brook the ridicule of cursed "Britishers."

AMERICAN—

It was because I disavowed the right
And need of arms to arbitrate our difference,
That I came hither: had a foreign arm
Been raised against us, I had then committed
My family to the care of the Almighty,
And joined in the chastisement of our foes.

CANADIAN—

And do you recognize your country's weal
Of greater moment than your family's?

AMERICAN—

My country's welfare is of greater moment
Than that of any family it contains,
Because its good or ill is that of all;
So to the care of God would I resign
My wife and children at my country's call.

CANADIAN—

Think you the arm of God a stronger fence
Than you can raise against your country's foes?

AMERICAN—

Who thinks not so, thinks not with valid mind;
Man's arm is feeble—God's omnipotent.

CANADIAN—

Granting your country's welfare such pre-eminence
Over your family's, and the arm of God
Infinite potency to succor either;
Can you gainsay the wisdom to assign
The weightier labor to the stronger arm,—
Your country's safety to the arm of God,
And take the meaner charge upon your own?

LAMENT OF THE LAST INDIAN OF HIS TRIBE

WHICH WAS NEARLY EXTERMINATED BY THE SMALLPOX

Like some scarr'd tree upon the mountain's breast,
Swept by an avalanche of all the rest,
I stand alone, and wear the scars as well
Of that dread scourge by which my kindred fell;
That terrible disease from which the brave
Has no defence, no amulet to save
His loved ones, nor himself—swept o'er the land,
As sweeps the prairie fire, or wave of sand
Across the burning waste. Alike the strong
And feeble perished as it swept along.
A few survived; my rugged frame defied
The withering blight, but all I cherished died.
And when the demon visitant was fled,
The living told their fingers for the dead,
And yet found graves, yet in their tears beheld
The vacant wigwam and the graves that held
Its fated occupants, who dwelt so late
In peace and calm content, that ever wait
On Heaven-approved desires, and only these
They ever felt and labor'd to appease.
The chase—the wild, invigorating chase—
Gave raiment, food and pastime to our race;
And to its lust of glory ample scope.
Aspiring to renown, some learned to cope
With hunters of repute, and satisfied

At once their wants and their inherent pride.
And now the few who braved the fell disease
Have perished one by one (as giant trees
On the tornado's path succumb at length
To time and tempest in declining strength),
Till I alone have yet to tread the road
That leads the red man to that blest abode
Where loved ones lost are to his arms restored,
And boundless wilds through endless time explored.

The summer of my twenty-second year was spent in Wisconsin, and while there I saw an old Indian who was said to be the last of his tribe, nearly the whole of which perished by the small-pox about 40 years before; and of those who survived he was the last. I versified his story, and the above is part of my effort, the rest being forgotten. This poem complete was one of those that I tried in vain to get published in the magazines. I thought at the time if they rejected it as being inferior to those they published in each issue, it must be very much below my valuation. But still I continued to "make my own review."

G. S.

ON MY FIRST GREY HAIR

I'm growing old, I'm turning grey,
  Youth and its hopes alike are gone!
My future for a single day
  That's past, if I may choose the one!

A PRAYER

O Thou at whose supreme behest
  This earth would cease to roll,
Take back and doom as suits Thee best
  This agonizing soul.

Not on a coward's trembling knee
  I for Thy mercy cry:
Do as may seem the best with me,
  I only ask to die.

However wayward has my will
  By prompting passion been,
I'm but the issue of thy skill,
  A passion-moved machine.

I fear not Hell, and how can death
  A hapless wretch appal,
Who knows the pangs of parting breath
  Are in the fate of all.

'Tis time my joyless days were spent,
  My sinking frame inurned,
Back to its native element
  This aching heart returned!

No more the glowing hopes of youth
  Their lustre round it shed;
As life reveal'd its bitter truth,
  Its sweet delusions fled.

No longer equal to endure
The hardships of a slave,
That last asylum of the poor,
Eternal sleep, I crave.

THE GIFTED HOG

There was of yore a hog of common strain,
By chance endow'd with human heart and brain;
In full development an equal mind,
And sensibility acute, refined;
And though in hog's exterior nature drest,
Ethereal fire glow'd within his breast.
His lot was cast with others of his race,
Hogs that excelled in every swinish grace:
With simultaneous rush and scrambling greed
They gorged with hoggish zest their daily feed,
But he disdained to scramble for his swill,
And meekly waited till they gulped their fill;
Or if at times, his dignity suppress'd,
By craving hunger, struggled with the rest,
Superior strength right hoggishly denied
His equal right, and rooted him aside.
Alas! poor hog, his share was ever small,
And very often he got none at all!
Too little hog to scramble for his share,
He yet was too much hog to live on air;
And thus denied the food he could not want,
His limbs grew feeble and his body gaunt;
In famine's ghastly arms he pined away,

Still more ethereal, fading day by day:
Until at length he gasped his final breath,
And gave his animal remains to death.
Behold the hapless votary of song,
Unfit to grapple with the demon wrong,
Unskill'd to squabble at the common trough
Of Fortune; roughly, rudely elbow'd off
By an illiterate herd of human swine,
Who know but one possessive pronoun—mine.

INDIAN WARFARE

SUGGESTED BY VIEWING AN INDIAN BATTLE-GROUND—SUPPOSED TO BE SUCH BY THE NUMBER OF SKULLS AND BONES MINGLED WITH THE SAND.

No scenes of war symbolicly display'd!
No trace of combat more than carnage made!
No hieroglyphics, no traditions tell
Whom victory crown'd or who for victory fell—
What dread combatant, leader of the brave
On many a warpath, fated to the grave—
What young aspirant to the war-dance fought,
And full admission to its glories bought,
Bore off the ghastly trophy at his side,
To join the dance probation late denied.
But still, as ruin points the channel where
The wild tornado roll'd its floods of air;
Or bleaching skeletons the vale of death,

Where the dread upas breathes its deadly breath;
These relics witness that a fierce affray
Has here betide, on some long-vanished day.
Some stubborn question, too complex for talk
Was here debated with the towahawk.
A troop of braves against a troop of braves
Array'd, my fancy summons from their graves;
And in the arms and costume of the race,
And combat signall'd on each dusky face,
The dauntless warriors to the carnage close,
To measure prowess with their willing foes.
Not from the summit of yon hill afar,
By aid of optic wield the helm of war,
But face to face, with tomahawk and knife,
Their chiefs begin the sanguinary strife—
Stir in their dusky braves the pulse of war,
And sound its echoing whoop through vales afar.
The dauntless brave, by feats of valor known,
Seeks not the scalp less sought for than his own;
And ere he feigns to meditate a blow,
With dauntless mien confronts an equal foe,
To give with valor, or with triumph claim
A brilliant jewel for the ring of fame.
Thus each to each in vengeful mood they yoke—
One hand impels, the other fends a stroke—
Equal to fend as to impart a blow,
Prolongs the conflict, yielding to and fro;
While from their wounds the reeking life-blood teems
Adown their swarthy limbs in crimson streams.

More desperate now than since his course begun,
The stricken brave that feels it nearly run—
His latest hope to perish with his foe—
Invokes the genius of a dying blow.
High o'er his plume his tomahawk he twirls,
And at his wary victor fiercely hurls;
Then, sinking to the earth no more to rise,
Folds his spent arms and like a warrior dies.

A CHARACTER FREQUENTLY FOUND

To those who in standing financial excel him
He is servile and fawning, would kiss where they
tell him;
To those who in standing pecuniary match him
He is social and surly in turns as they catch him;
But those by misfortune to penury bound,
O, Providence, shield from this insolent hound!
But few in that station, if any, than he
More plainly beseem the unwelcome degree;
And such is his place. His egregious conceit
Makes life in the sorest of penury sweet.
He doubts the creation of this little planet
Had long been accomplish'd when he came—to
man it,
And fancies the theory convincingly strong
That it could not have wanted his influence long;
But how it will want him when called to the task
Is a question he has not the courage to ask.

A MIDNIGHT SOLILOQUY

To keep starvation from my door
('Tis vain to think of doing more)—
Over this engine, night and day,
I pine my ebbing life away,
With not a sympathizing friend
To pity what he cannot mend.
Better for poet, far, to be,
If not the head of a family,
The tenant of a nameless grave,
Than some prosaic worldling's slave,
Who fosters for the art of song
Attraction negatively strong.
But in domestic bonds am I,
From penury's inclement sky,
Denied the refuge dread, to die:
My consort and the little flowers,
Whose infant life was lit from ours,
Demand my labor, and my arm
To shield when danger threatens harm;
Else would I close this mortal scene,
And join the myriads who have been.

TO A MISER

"There is a tear for all that die,"
So Byron wrote. If true it be,
Some blear, old, money-hunting eye
Will pay that tribute small to thee.

TO MY ANGEL DAUGHTER IN THE VOICE OF HER MOTHER

In thine elysian home of rest,
  My angel daughter, do they know
With what emotion throbs the breast
  Of friends untimely left below;
Or are they, in that happy sphere,
Unconscious that they once were here?

As other joys were lost in thee
  When thy young life to earth was given,
So shall all other sorrows be
  Till death shall reunite in Heaven
Thy soul that never wore a stain
And mine from sin redeem'd again.

I dream'd last night thou hadst return'd,
  And started up with outstretched arm;
To clasp thy form my bosom yearn'd;
  But the exertion broke the charm:
The truth flash'd through my 'wilder'd brain,
And night closed round my heart again.

Before the fell destroyer came
  And mark'd thee for his early prize,
Life never warm'd a little frame
  So beauteous in a mother's eyes;
And as it faded day by day,
Grew more angelic in decay.

Life's closing scenes, o'er which the veil
  Of everlasting slumber fell—
The gaze so fix'd, and features pale—
  Deep graven in remembrance dwell;
And while that sense can still retain,
One sad, dear image will remain.

Not till affix'd the seal of death
  Thy trusting heart became afraid,
When, startled by the waste of breath,
  Thy pleading eyes beseech'd for aid:
The anchor wonted to restrain
Was cast confidingly in vain.

My arm was thy maternal shield,
  And not till that distressing hour
Hadst thou in vain for aid appealed,
  Nor knew it was a finite power:
Than mine, a higher, mightier throne
Was to thy little heart unknown.

But death, that sever'd us, reveal'd
  How helpless was that arm to save;
The secret that till then was seal'd,
  Alas! was open'd with the grave;
And thou by light divine canst see
I am what thou hast ceas'd to be.

EPITAPH ON RIEL

Sedition, here thy votary lies,
  By all his own forsaken;
Like every votary of guilt,
  By justice overtaken.

If he has gone with thee to dwell,
  Arch Minister of Evil,
Hold fast the reins that govern Hell,
  Or he will soon be devil.

And though to Heaven he sneaks his way
  Through some back gate, unguarded,
He'll sing your old seditious lay,
  And be alike rewarded.

And when the scene in Heaven is past,
  And he expelled the skies,—
See, from the ashes of the last,
  This new-born Phœnix rise.

He hastes to Hell, with bold design
  On its imperial raiment;
By that same guilt that made them thine,
  Proclaim'd an equal claimant.

The above poem was recited extempore in a bar-room to a number of volunteers who were about starting for Red River to quell the Riel insurrection. The volunteers stared at me while

I was reciting and then looked at the landlord, and he in turn looked at me, and we all looked at each other all round, but said nothing. This was my first recitation of poetry, and my last. I would not have committed the sin this one time, but the occasion seemed to me so appropriate and inviting. The only merit of this is in its hasty production. I think it has some in that respect.

G. S.

IMAGINATION

Eternal fountain of ethereal joy,
Imagination, what had been my life
Hadst thou not been my refuge in distress,
My haven in the storms of human life?
How often hast thou carried me away
From cruel poverty's belittling cares,
Leaving a while the perishable husk
Of immortality, to be resumed!
And not unfrequent in my hours of toil,
Mated with others of prosaic thought,
Or under the restraint imposed on speech
By galling servitude, or when alone,
I with an errant comet for my steed,
Have through inanity immense career'd;
Urging my courser to the speed of thought,
Shot through his orbit of a thousand years
In a few seconds—but, alas! returned,
O'er my degraded lot wept tears of blood.

SUDDEN WEALTH

Awake, O Muse! and ply thy sacred art,
That few acquire, and even none impart.
Thy theme, a heart by poverty distress'd
For twenty years, and then with riches blest.
This age will doubtless disapprove our song,
But ages doubtless have been proven wrong:
Death has transform'd in ages that are sped
A living rhymster to a poet dead;
So to a future age we dedicate
Our little tale, and hasten to relate.
Since sweet delusions warm'd the youthful mind,
Since life was bliss, and love was bliss refined,
For twenty years of poverty and pain
I courted Mammon, but I sued in vain.
Avails it now, what fruitless means I tried;
All that avail'd me not, oblivion hide.
My last and sole endeavor that repaid
My care and toil was for petroleum made.
My stock—a site and equipage secured,
A will to toil and limbs to toil inured,
A little purse on which I only drew
For daily food and wages weekly due;
These were my stock-in-trade when I began
To seek in Fortune's favor that of man.
As through each stratum of the rock I bored,
Nor found it yet, I still the next explored;
Till means exhausted warned me to suspend
The search, but hope impell'd me to extend,

With each to-morrow promis'd me success,
But debt incurring brought me but distress.
Judging the future by the fruitless past,
I to despair resigned my hopes at last,
Reserving for my heirs the choice of sorrow,
To toil to-day or want for bread to-morrow.
But scarcely had I ceased to urge the chase,
When, lo! the treasure rushed to my embrace.
At sudden wealth, what rapture thrills the breast
That poverty and debt had long distress'd!
The wretch who trembling on the scaffold stands,
With rope adjusted, and with pinion'd hands,
Whom pardon rescues from the ruthless law,
Just when the arm is stretched the bolt to draw,
Feels not a rapture more intense than I
When want's deep fountain of distress ran dry.
And yet I love not gold, but O! I hate
The poor man's friendless, disrespected state!
See from the pinnacle of wealth an ape,
Resembling man in little more than shape,
Placed by inheritance on high, look down
On honest labor with disdainful frown.
In a toy thimble you might store his sense,
And with his pride inflate balloons immense;
The greatest vice that knocks not at his door
Consists in giving to the idle poor.
Yet is he honor'd, while intrinsic worth—
The gift of God—lies trodden in the earth.
But when to poverty is added debt—
O, powers celestial! aid me to forget—

With some oblivious balm anoint my brain,
And bid remembrance never wake again!
Envy, no doubt, on hearing I had struck
A copious vein, exclaimed, "A fool for luck!"
But envy knows society prefers
Such lucky fools to poor philosophers;
Nor even envy's self can long withhold
The homage due, or rather paid, to gold.
When the report of my success had been
Confirmed, and many had my fountain seen,
How changed was I from the despised and mean;
Nor was the change effected by degrees,
As spring enrobes or fall denudes the trees;
Behold a gentleman at once reveal'd,
That filth of poverty had long concealed:
Thus on the public way the diamond lies—
Adhesive clay deludes unconscious eyes,
Till solvent elements the gem betray,
And some rejoiced pedestrian bears away.
Now, disrespect, misfortune's brindled hound,
Late at my heels, some other victim found;
In every face a new-born friendship shone,
And every voice assumed its softest tone.
The cold, the scornful and averted eye,
That seeks a refuge till the poor goes by,
That late had been my daily wont to meet,
As to and from my work I trod the street,
I meet no more; all meet me with a smile,
And pay some fawning compliment—to oil.
The portly merchant, standing in his door,

Just as I've passed him many times before,
Now nods and smiles and seems at once to say,
"Purchase at pleasure and at pleasure pay";
The doctor, too, whom I so long have known,
So often met in crowds and oft alone,
Who never deigned to know me till the night
When Fortune raised me to his gracious sight,
Salutes me now with that familiar air
That Fortune's favorites to each other wear.
And many more that wonted not to greet,
Perceive a fellow-creature when we meet;
And Mammon's dog, that my old raiment tore,
Won by my new attire, assails no more.
Ye sons of Fortune, in her arms caress'd,
Lull'd on her lap and fondled to her breast,
With every luxury the age bestows,
That art contrives and fertile valley grows,
Furnished by her indulgent hands alone,
With no auxiliary efforts of your own—
Can you, by virtue of your higher state,
Suspend a moment the decree of Fate—
Can you, confronted by the champion Death,
Add to your number one forbidden breath;
Or can the skilful chemist separate
The mingled ashes of the poor and great;
Or are your souls more precious in the skies,
Or from what other source does pride arise?

This poem was suggested by a story I heard told of a man of small means, who invested his

all in the sinking of an oil well. After his money was all gone he continued to drill till he became involved in debt, and his men refused to work longer unless paid up. He prevailed on them to work one day more, and in the last hour of that day, when the drill was put down for the last time, it pierced through the rock into the long-sought oil, and he became a rich man immediately.

G. S.

TOLL-GATES ON THE PATH OF FAME

Once when the Fates were in a pinch for stamps
(For they were sometimes in pecuniary cramps),
They sold to Human Jealousy their claim,
Their right and title to the path of fame.
When Mr. Jealousy had paid the bill
He had not left wherewith to run the mill;
But to his brother, Envy, he disclosed
His hapless plight, who brother-like proposed
To purchase half the road, and reimburse
One-half the recent outlay to his purse.
The offer was accepted, and the twain,
With equal interest in the thorny lane,
Applied themselves to make their purchase pay—
A project worthy of such men as they;
At length, ignoring every other plan
(Besides the welfare of aspiring man),
They put on toll-gates, and a rate per poll
From all aspirants they exact as toll.

Their slavish votaries, the critic crew,
Demand the toll as Genius passes through:
He pays—he looks defiance at his foes—
Shakes from his feet their dust, and on he goes.

FUNERAL NOTICES

How strange that death should always strike
The man that others vastly like;
While countless thousands disrespected
Are by that friendless state protected
From his assault: but it is true,
That he is wonted so to do;
For every funeral notice ends:
"Was much esteem'd by many friends."

REPLY

TO A FOPPISH STUDENT OF THE NORMAL SCHOOL, WHO, HEARING ANOTHER STUDENT MAKE COMMENDATORY REFERENCE TO SOME LINES I HAD SHOWN HIM, JEERINGLY TOLD ME NOT TO HIDE MY LIGHT UNDER A BUSHEL, BUT EDIFY THE COMPANY WITH SOME OF MY HIGH POETRY.

The Bible tells us not to put
Our lamp beneath a bushel; but
Avails it whether so conceal'd
Or unto sightless eyes reveal'd.

A REVERIE; OR, THE POET'S PROGRESS

This is an allegorical composition, in which conditions of life, attributes, and such are personified, and made to act and speak their own influence. The things personified are in order as they are introduced—Reason, Public Opinion (under the title of Fate's Appraiser), Poverty, Want of Learning, Hope and Fortitude (under the title of Dare). The substance of the poem is a reasoning on my own nature and inclination of mind, my mental force, chance of success, and the obstacles to be overcome, with a digression near the end touching the influence of poverty on the connubial state.

In Fancy's yearning eye appraised,
And to the throne of genius raised,
Down on applauding earth I gazed.

But ere I'd long exalted been
Old Reason closed the blissful scene,
And brought me down among the mean.

And in a fierce, unbridled rage,
Despite the honor due to age,
I thus harangued the hoary sage:

Begone, you old, grey-headed curse,
Before I call you something worse;
Why come you here to trouble me?

Why thus explode my reverie?
Leave me, I ask no other boon,
To float in Fancy's gay balloon,
And from its elevation see
What is not, and may never be;
While you below may whine and grumble
At things o'er which you daily stumble,
'Tis true, and much by me lamented,
I'm not as Fancy represented:
But what of that, if it be bliss;
In such a woeful world as this
Man stands in need of all the pleasures
Attainable by guiltless measures.
In Fancy life has all its zest;
Mine, sure, would be a joyless breast,
Were't not that Fancy's scenes inspire
My soul with raptures warmer, higher
Than all the cheerless, frigid truth
That you demonstrate to youth.
The scenes of Fancy are the bread
On which my famished soul is fed.
I'm not as others round me are,
My soul is more unearthly, far;
But whether meet for Heaven or Hell
I've neither wish nor power to tell.
I only feel its rise and fall,
And sip the nectar and the gall,
The depth of night and height of day
That hold it with alternate sway
The Muse is helpless to portray.

I'm not of that unmeaning throng
That gaudy fashion leads along,
Who in the mirror only see
The faultless form of Deity,
But sink unnoticed in their graves
Like bubbles bursting on the waves.
Nor am I of the sordid train,
Ever upon the path of gain,
Pursuing eager, though it flee,
Just as misfortune follows me.
(I've known him that would rob his brother,
Ay, steal the grave clothes off his mother!
But, in his Sabbath cloak arrayed,
Excelled the meekness of a maid).
Nor of the legion who persist
In being only to exist,
Whose highest, most exalted thought
Is by the lowest passion taught;
Whose yearnings, morning, noon and night,
Subside with sated appetite.
I'm one of an unhappy few
Who weep to be and yearn to do;
One of the very few on earth
That know how little they are worth,
Cursed with the mental sight to scan
The station of a common man,—
And hence the strong, innate desire
To scramble one gradation higher.
To live a space on toil-won bread
And die that idle worms be fed,

Nor leaves behind a single trace
That earth was once my dwelling-place;
But be by all mankind forgot,
When even Balaam's ass is not;
If I to such an end was born,
The doom I can't avert I scorn.

"Unhappy youth," the sage replied,
"My mission is not to deride;
I have from Heaven to bestow
No more on friend, nor less on foe,
Than such instructions as the wise
In but theology despise,
(And *inter nos* I have a few
Disciples in that science, too;
And they will people every clime
Before the last events of time).
The eaglet nature prompts to try,
She first endows with power to fly,
And not less justly wills to man
That they who would are they who can,
If to their purpose they bestir them,
Nor think that she will do it for them,
Nor think to merit golden prizes
By making leaden sacrifices.
Long and laborious are the ways
That meet in universal praise;
But few, if any, are so long
And toilsome as the path of song:
Not always he who merits fame

Survives to see avow'd the claim;
For many a bard returns to earth
Ere fame has yet confess'd his birth.
But after ages recompense
The galling wrongs of ignorance
And jealousy, and twine the wreath
Of triumph round his memory.
Who inly burns to win and wear
The poet's wreath, must nobly dare;
Nor quail to meet the murderous throng
That lurks his winding path along;
Nor from that path digress a stride,
Though foes assail on every side.
Not the guerillas, chiefly known
As critics, haunt his path alone;
Foes of a very different kind
Assail the bold, aspiring mind.
Of these, the chief, long, gaunt and grim
(And many a round you'll have with him),
Is Poverty; and in his rear
Lurks mental degradation near,
Besides a nameless brood that owe
Their being to that giant foe.
Though fierce and many are his foes
His friends are often worse than those.
The apathy of those possess'd
Of "portion of the truly bless'd"
Mangles the lone, poetic heart
More sorely than the critic's dart.
Not to intimidate, I bode

These dangers; for on every road
To fame the valiant never fail,
Though foes and friend-foes both assail,
For dauntless energy and toil
To till the mind's unbroken soil,
Can compass highest ends designed,
And yield the rarest fruits of minds.
Shame to thy country that she gave
Not yet poetic dust a grave."
So spoke the sage, and, like a light
Extinguished, vanished from my sight.

Roused from the dull, lethargic state
In which so many mortals wait
For fame and fortune, I arose,
Bidding to indolent repose
A last adieu, I took the road
Of sonnet, epigram and ode.
But lo! I had not travelled long
When Fate's Appraiser came along
And thus accost: "The will of Fate is
That I shall brand you 'small potatoes'."
Not at the present, Sir Auxiliary,
Though Fate should doom me to the pillory,
As long as I can lift my hand,
I'll brook not your ignoble brand.
Tell Mr. Fate to go to—well
I would not send him quite to Hell,
But some remote, untrodden shore,
Where he can frown on me no more.

But, just as though he never heard me,
He, without halting, strode toward me,
And in a moment had me collar'd
And for assistance loudly hallooed;
When Poverty and Want of Learning
Sprang from an ambush at this warning.

The first was of gigantic height
And so terrific to the sight,
The symbols are not yet invented
By which he can be represented.
So, of his guise I'll say no more
Than o'er his frowning brow he wore
What mortal eye ne'er saw before,
A turban wove of children's curls,
The locks of little boys and girls;
Cradled in want and turned adrift
In childhood for themselves to shift;
To whom a shrivell'd crust had been
A dainty morsel seldom seen,
Whose naked, wasted, friendless forms,
Pierced while in life by winter's storms,
He'd here and there found lying dead
Through want of shelter, clothes and bread.

A glance at his companion told
He had been cast in different mould;
His sleepy eyes could just be seen
Their slightly parted lids between;
His bull-frog nose was wide and flat,
His cheeks hung down and shook with fat,

His features waked the common thought
Of being better fed than taught.
He was a foe that few would fear,
With none to render succor near;
A dastard scarcely would be daunted
By such a sluggish foe confronted;
But with a desperate fiend to back him
The bravest only dare attack him.

When by these cut-throats first assail'd,
I for a moment only quail'd,
But less through valor than despair,
I faced them with a dauntless air.
Grim Poverty advanced, elate,
To aid the underling of Fate;
And, after a profound congee
To him, at once confronted me,
And said, beginning stern and slow:
"Behold in me your fellest foe!
And on my fat companion see
The symbols of the next degree.
'Tis by the King of Kings' command
That I against you lift my hand;
It was to me by him assigned
To be the scourge of human kind,—
Yes; on that memorable day
When man was lured to disobey,
And from the grateful arbor led,
Forth wandered he to toil for bread.
Obedient to that high behest,

I've done, and still will do my best
To scourge them without intermission
Till he revokes the said commission.
I've crush'd beneath my cruel feet
The noblest hearts that ever beat,
While many of a happier fate—
But to the problem on the slate:—
You're on the thorny path of fame
In quest of an exalted name,
With three stern enemies around you
Combined to harass and confound you,
And others ambush'd on the way
Will pounce like panthers on their prey.
What think you? Have you any chance
'Gainst such resistance to advance?
Listen till I relate a few
Exploits I've had with such as you;
And when you hear the revelation,
You'll see your hopeless situation."
I bow'd submission, and he told
What turned my life streams chilly cold;
He told of many a brilliant mind
That noblest aims and ends designed,
Whom, after fending many a blow,
His iron arms had stricken low.
Digressing, then, from "such as you,"
And humbler paths adverting to,
He briefly glanced at general life,
Then made a text of man and wife.
He talked of Love with mocking mien;

With oaths and flippant jests between.
He said he'd entered many a cot
In which he dwelt, but found him not;
For, soon as he appeared in view,
Love, like a startled partridge, flew.
He boasted of unnumbered pairs
He crush'd with overwhelming cares;
Of widows' groans and orphans' cries,
Of blighted hopes and broken ties;
Of many, many a magic chain
That Hymen proudly wrought in vain,
And of his victims, named a few,
Of whom were several that I knew.
Of one young pair, remembrance still
Retains the fate, and ever will.
He said, to search the world around,
A nobler pair could not be found
In Love's enchanted fetters bound.
Rich in affection, virtue, health,
Honor, and all but worldly wealth,
And that they doubtless would have won
Had not domestic strife begun.
He strove with all his wonted arts
To separate their loving hearts;
And from his wily, crafty brain
Drew many new-born schemes in vain;
Each to the other was so true
That all his wiles and craft could do
Could not their faithful souls estrange,
Nor in them work the slightest change.

But when he was about to yield
To Love the glory of the field,
The devil sent the timely aid
Of an old, mischief-making maid,
Who leap'd Love's breastwork with a bound
And swung her two-edged cutlass round,
Laying at every spiteful blow
Some happier sister's consort low,
Because a man had never kiss'd her,
While one had wed her younger sister.
Now, when her hellish work was done,
The well-defended fortress won,
And Love resigned his gleaming blade
To an old, withered, wrinkled maid,
"My heel," the weeping husband said,
"Shall crush that female serpent's head."

He'd just returned from this digression
Back to the problem of progression,
When on the scene arrived a pair
Of heroes, Hope and Valiant Dare,
Who, when they saw how matters stood,
Joined with the weak as heroes should,
And three to three for life began
The warfare of aspiring man.

EPITAPH ON A CHILD

More blest the spirit that returns to Heaven
Unstain'd by guilt, than that with guilt forgiven.

A DREAM

After retiring one night, I lay thinking of the fabled stream whose waters restore and perpetuate youth, and falling asleep in that mood, I dreamed the following lines:

O! for the stream of life's eternal morn,
The glowing thought forever newly born,
Unfading zest of raptures that abide,
And passion ever in the swelling tide!

A STORMY NIGHT

COMPOSED ON THE NIGHT OF THE GREAT STORM IN THE AUTUMN OF 1873, IN WHICH MANY VESSELS WERE WRECKED AND MANY LIVES LOST

Hark! how the trees uprooted fall
Before the fury of the squall,
While every still succeeding blast
Proclaims the mercy of the last.
I hear the bending forest groan,
I hear the lake's prophetic moan,
Like distant thunder's lingering roar
It rolls along the sounding shore.
How many eyes to-night must close,
Not in their wonted sweet repose,
In their accustom'd beds, beneath
The waves in the repose of death?

What youthful hearts of fond devotion,
That throb with early love's emotion,
Whose passion, though of gentle form,
Exceeds the silence of the storm,
Ere this terrific night shall be
Deducted from futurity
With all their dreams of future bliss,
Must perish in the wild abyss!
What ship that often has withstood
The howling winds and rolling flood,
O'ercome by their superior power,
Must hail this night the fatal hour!
Long having nobly toiled to keep
Her charge above the boiling deep,
At length, despoiled of helm and mast,
The dreadful moment comes at last.
Her noblest effort vainly made
To mount the waves 'gainst her array'd
She founders: of a floundering wreck,
The angry waters sweep the deck,
And round her eddy, surge and roar
With rage transcending all before,
As, round the struggling prey he holds
The boa coils his tightening folds.
The piteous wail, the hurried pray'r,
Uplifted hands and frenzied stare,
The one or two who kiss the rod,
And bless the chastening hand of God;
A brave commander's gallant mien
Through all the wild, tumultuous scene,

At once on Fancy's vision pour,
And banish sleep from eyes on shore.
How many souls unfit to meet
Their Maker at the judgment seat,
Shall from this closing drama rise
To meet their Author in the skies?
Lord, let their hapless doom allay
Thy vengeance at the judgment day.

SITTING IN THE DARK

"Why sit in the dark, Nelly; have you no light?"
Said a young married man as he enter'd one night.
"I love," answered Nelly, "to sit in the dark";
And the young husband laugh'd at his Nelly's remark.
But he would not have laugh'd could he then have divined
What he yet had to learn of a gloom-loving mind.
Through the years that have pass'd since that evening till now
The clouds of ill-omen have darken'd her brow:
Her heart, not unkind, is devoted to gloom,
And she dwells in her house like a ghost in a tomb.
At every small cloud that flits over the sky,
She thinks that a dreadful tornado is nigh;
The smallest of troubles affright her and fret her,
And she groans o'er misfortunes that never beset her.
You would think to behold her, so woefully mild,

That she mourned for the loss of her favorite child;
While all that kind Nature in wisdom has given
Are happy and bright as the day-beams of Heaven.
And now, my young captain in want of a mate
For the old but staunch ship, "The Connubial State,"
Thus interrogate her before you embark:
"Lovest thou, my dear Fanny, to sit in the dark?"
And except her reply be emphatically, "No,"
She'll quail when the winds of adversity blow.

HENRY K. WHITE

Man of the world, whose tears for perished worth
Abate the loud demands of wealth and birth,
If thou for genius bright
Hast one to spare,
Go to the grave of White
And weep it there.

EPITAPH

ON A MAN WHO PRETENDED TO BE A GREAT HUNTER, AND WHO DELIGHTED IN TELLING HIS WONDERFUL ADVENTURES

Here lies a hunter great, to whom Rob Roy,
Or Nimrod's self, was an apprentice boy;
The bears and wolves and panthers he has shot
Could eat at once the deer that he has not.

PRAYER OF THE RICH MAN FOR THE POOR ON CHRISTMAS EVE, 1878

Father, I thank Thee for my ample store,
Though some less worthy have been given more!
I thank Thee, Father, for a heart to feel
The wounds of others, in a wish to heal;
How oft have I, appealing to Thy throne,
Engross'd in others' weal, forgot my own:
But be it ever so; for Thou wilt not
Forget him, Lord, who has himself forgot.
On this, the eve of that auspicious morn
When Christ, our Saviour, in the flesh was born;
Eve of compassion for the child of need,
To clothe, if naked, and if hungry, feed,
For low-born poverty I supplicate
Such frugal blessings as beseem the state,
That little wanted by the rude to be
As blest as I in my refined degree.
I would not, Lord, beget unknown desires,
By granting more than sorest want requires;
For in the vulgar, more than higher state,
New wants are born of wants that we abate.
But, Lord, be merciful, and give them bread,
Let none this night go supperless to bed,
Nor rise to fast—let all be amply fed.
Fain would I pass this night from door to door
Dispensing blessings to the worthy poor:
But, Lord, I cannot, dare not, so reveal
A want of faith in Thee to guard their weal.

But, having thus my sympathy express'd—
My deep compassion—I retire to rest,
Trusting in Him who sees the sparrow fall,
To know the wants of each and succor all:
But whether, Lord, thou feedest the poor or not,
Forget not those who have themselves forgot.

LINES WRITTEN IN A YOUNG LADY'S AUTOGRAPH ALBUM

As life's now partly written sheet
Is fill'd as day and night repeat,
In each succeeding line,
May faith and hope divine
And sinless pleasure meet.

TO HARPER BROTHERS, NEW YORK

ON RECEIVING FROM THEM A REJECTED POEM

Gentlemen,—

As story says, a Grecian throng
A speaker loudly cheer'd and long;
And he, with proud, enraptured gaze,
Inhaled the sweet perfume of praise:
But when the votaries of his cause
Had ceased their loud, prolonged applause,
A sage in the assembled crowd
Exclaimed, in accents stern and loud:

"In truth, if thou hadst wisely spoken,
This audience had not silence broken."
I hence infer that the reverse
Is true of my rejected verse:
Had I less "wisely" poetised it,
You surely had not thus despised it.

OPPORTUNITIES LOST

A traveller entering on a leafless waste,
From a luxuriant landscape, look'd behind,
And sighed for prospects he had passed in haste,
To more enchanting scenes he thought to find.

So when we enter life's autumnal years,
Compared with sunny youth, so bleak and void,
We look behind us through a mist of tears,
At life's fair prospects we but half enjoy'd.

CHARACTER OF MR. P.

Master of arts to seem was Mr. P.,
Profound in cunning and hypocrisy;
Pride, selfishness, hypocrisy and guile,
The first voluptuous as the others vile,
Were his chief attributes, nor had he more,
Save but the bastard offsprings of the four.
His was an arm that stretched not to relieve,
A hand that open'd only to receive:
To rob a wife in labor of her bed,

And snatch the pillow from a dying head,
Are feats for which he was sublimely fit,
When clad in mail, with arms and legal writ;
But wanting these, he wanted heart to dare
What outraged manhood could not tamely bear.

CONSOLATION

Offered to a young lady in the case of a rare flower that had been sent to her by a friend failing to bloom at the appointed time:

I marvel not thy flowers decline
To bloom while thou art lingering nigh:
A beauty so eclipsed by thine
They dare not offer to the eye.

REPLY

To Fanny's enthusiastic eulogy of the birds and flowers that did their utmost to entertain us in our walk in the woods, on the twenty-second of May, 1857. The stanza is not a poetic exaggeration, but simply expresses the truth:

The tuneful birds and flowers divine
Profaned the gifts they offered me;
I heard no other voice than thine;
I saw no beauty but in thee!

THE GIFT OF FLOWERS FROM MY INTENDED WIFE.

The little flowers thou gav'st to me
Are faded, and their beauty fled;
But shrunk and withered though they be
They still their wonted fragrance shed.

Thus, Bella, may it be with thee
When years external charms erase;
May virtue and fidelity
Remain thy still surviving grace.

That when thy lovely youth is past,
With all its fond, alluring charms,
May that which Heaven designed to last,
Preserve thee welcome to my arms.

DEATH OF AJAX—THE LESS

The ship of Ajax was wrecked, and all on board were lost but Ajax, who was saved by the special grace of Neptune. But as soon as he was safe ashore, he clambered up a high rock, and from the summit proclaimed that he had saved himself in spite of the power and wrath of Neptune. His conduct enraged Neptune, who expressed his indignation to Jove as follows:

"Ungrateful man! the more we deign to bless,
The more his pride avows him wronged with less:

This truth sustained by many favors past,
Admits no doubt that can survive the last—
A man by power and grace of Neptune saved,
Sits on yon cliff blaspheming that he braved
My power and vengeance: lo! the rock I rend,
And the bold ingrate down to Pluto send";
Thus having said, he launched his fateful mace,
And rent the seat of Ajax from its base:
The disunited summit seaward fell,
And carried Ajax to the deep, and Hell.

G. S., 1899.

A SKATE FOR LIFE

Can fancy conceive fitter time for a skate?
The ice is secure and smooth as a slate,
The moon over all sheds her silvery light,
Did ever occasion so strongly invite?
Such occasion may come not again for a space,
Or coming not find me prepared to embrace,
So I'm off for a skate up the river a league
And return, to acquire a sleeping fatigue,
He said, as he reached for his skates on a shelf,
And was gone in a trice to commune with himself.
The home of the skater was one of a few
On the banks of a river a settlement new,
And the river came down from a forest so lone
That its spacious extent was imperfectly known.
He sped up the stream with the speed of a gale
When the seaman reduces the breadth of his sail,

Till the league he had purposed to run lay behind
And a turning manœuvre was cut in his mind;
Just then came a sound from a neighboring hill
And it was not the wail of a lone whip-poor-will.
'Twas the howl of a wolf, and a call to his race,
Forthwith to assemble and join in a chase—
'Twas a call to a feast that was well understood,
And answered from different parts of the wood.
The skater was conscious at once of his peril,
Unarmed, he was fenceless and weak as a girl;
And he knew he must furnish the demons a meal,
Or defy them in flight on his slippers of steel.
And it seemed but delusion to foster a hope
With the fleet-footed fiends of the forest to cope:
Though life was the stake he could do but his best,
And leave in the hands of his Maker the rest.
In turning, a look towards Heaven he cast—
'Twas a supplicant look, and was meet for the last;
And the eye of Omnipotence read in the glance
A silent appeal for some favoring chance.
He sped, but not long had he been on his course
When he heard his pursuers assembled in force;
And not long had they been in pursuit when he knew
He must die, or some chance in his favor ensue:
Though he sped with a dizzy and breath-taking speed
It was short by a fatal degree of his need;
For the speed of the skater is dizzy in vain
'Gainst that which the sinewy wolf can sustain.

And the end—the sole end—he now struggled to gain
Was to die as near home as his speed could attain.
At a bend he encountered a savage recruit
With courage enhanced by the nearing pursuit,
And was instantly charged by the ravenous brute.
To foil him by stratagem now was too late,
And he feared the last leaf had been turned in his fate,
But he dashed his blue bonnet right full in his face
And the head of the wolf of his own took the place.
Surprised and alarmed at proceedings so rare,
He howled in the bonnet, and leaped in the air;
But in spite of his frantic manœuvre to doff
The stubborn appendage refused to come off;
And he rushed blindly on till he met with the pack,
And I need not record they were taken aback.
The howls of affright in the bonnet of blue,
And the capers he cut to escape from it too,
Had such an effect on the others that they
Without a division abandoned the prey.
They probably feared that a similar fate,
If the chase was continued, on all might await;
So away to the forest recesses they scudded,
Content to go supperless rather than hooded.
Astonished no less than the wolf in the hood,
The skater sped down the solidified flood
Till in sight of the home he so recently left,
(That home of his presence so nearly bereft),

Then kneeling he thanks to Omnipotence gave,
Who stooped in His plentiful mercy to save;
For he felt his return to his friends and abode
Was a gift from the hands of a bountiful God.

REFLECTIONS

On three human skulls, seemingly female, and young; also two articulated hands, on view in the window of 413 Parliament Street, Toronto, in the last week of 1903.

Why do these spoils of death appear
Midst gaiety and festive cheer,
Placed for the passing throng to see,
As New-Year toys are wont to be?
The thought atones, that from the view
May meditative mood ensue,
And moderate in some degree
Unthoughtfulness and revelry.
Long would the scene my mind engage
Ere the last thought had quit the stage
Suggested by these skulls, that say
Not who, or what, or when were they;
Yet in their silent ruin teach
More than they ever taught by speech.
These teeth unseemly to the sight,
Have once to beauty paid their mite;
When ruby lips their tips reveal'd
But ghastly nakedness conceal'd;

And flitting smiles dispensed a grace
To every feature of the face;
And lustre of the conscious soul
Suffused the incarnated whole.
The fluent, argumental tongue
Oft its imperious challenge flung
To verbal warfare from between
These pearly teeth—itself unseen:
Or as an advocate sustain'd
The cause in which it was retain'd;
And yet, let charity suppose,
Did never truth and right oppose;
Nor ever persiflage unchaste
The mind's interpreter debased.
These empty cells were wont to hold
The orbs that once in lustre roll'd;
Transcending far the rarest gem
That ever gleam'd on diadem.
Apart from their diurnal use,
Those eyes had functions less obtuse,
And more ethereal far than they
Which they performed from day to day:
Adaptive to a changeful mood,
Reticent, frank or coyly shrewd,
In every glance they stood confess'd
Empowered envoys of the breast,
To sue, repulse, coquet, defy,
Or to their last resort to fly,
And weep—lo such is woman's eye!
These empty domes in which the brain

Throbbed under thought's laborious strain,
And wondrous enginery has wrought
In the mysterious birth of thought,
And now of every beauty shorn,
Have once a wreathy chaplet worn:
From these dismantled brows have hung
The glossy ringlets often sung;
And oft the haughty toss of pride
Has flung these pendant locks aside:
Death's rapine hand has snatched the prize,
And quenched for aye those lustrous eyes.
These hands, anatomized and spare,
Whose fingers once were round and fair,
Have on the changeful stage of life
Sustain'd the part of maid or wife,
Or both, ere dawned the fateful day
That still'd their throbbing pulse for aye.
These slender hands articulate,
Each to the other once the mate,
Were skill'd in mysteries to assuage
The pains of illness and of age,
By soothing touch and fond caress,
Not to a dying parent less,
Than to the lover by reproof
And haughty bearing kept aloof,
Till his seductive wiles prevail'd
Against the fortress they assail'd.
What deeds magnanimous and brave
These hands have wrought to help and save,
Were never told, as ostentation

Usurps all rights of celebration;
And they had no solicitude
On public notice to obtrude—
Thus muses Fancy on the dead
Beyond the light that truth has shed.

NIAGARA FALLS

Impressions and fancies on viewing for the first time, and from the American side, on Sept. 15th, 1906:

The famous cataract whose ancient birth
Dates from the glacial epoch of the earth,
I held in contemplation for the day,
With its environ that in prospect lay.
Through ages past, long ere the steps of man
Its shores betray'd, enquiring Fancy ran;
When the cyclopean mammoth left his spoor,
Without incurring peril of arm'd pursuer:
And from the scenes inductive Fancy drew
Events of time predestined to ensue;
Time will complete the gulch and Erie's shore
Will curb an inland ocean's wrath no more!
Long sunken wrecks will strew a new-made ground,
And human skulls with grinning teeth lay round!
In these events, man has no role to play;
His hand might haste, but not suspend a day.
Till water ceases in the mists to rise,
And loaded cloud restore it from the skies,

Will these events draw nearer day by day,
However distant in the future they.
But franchise holders, be ye not concern'd!
Ere these events, your names will be inurn'd;.
Your marble tombs will have dissolved to earth,
And fame forgotten your ogygian birth.
Now present scenes arise in mental view
That are not entered on the day's menu:
First comes professor of hydrodynamics
(Important branch of present-day mechanics)
And calculates the equine power needed
To tow it off to Uncle Sam—thus he did;
Then comes along a specialist on 'quakes,
And tells how many San Francisco shakes
It represents per annum; then comes next
The company promoter and his text
Is syndicates and shares and dividends
Of one per cent. per hour for all his friends;
Last comes the man who dotes on olden things,
And grappling hooks and tarry tackle brings
To raise the *Caroline*—but Sam says "No!
Nurse not sad memories in a five-cent show;
Let our inglorious incidents of war
Pass to oblivion—not a cheap bazaar;
And curse the poet who in deathless song
These adverse memories would through time
prolong."
The virtuoso laid his tackle by,
And called up all to drink, and all were dry.
His calling now the gorge-route agent plies,

Exhorting travellers to patronize
The foresaid route—a twenty-minute spell
Hung by a hair above the gulf of Hell;
Where raven locks may justly fear a blight;
If danger imminent can blanch them white.
That no calamity has marr'd the past
Avails not those to whom it comes at last:
And come it will, such horror as the "Tay"
Will be remembered from some fateful day.
But to the "Falls"—unable to compute
Such vast hydraulic power, I substitute
A simile *poetic* of its power,
To be repeated sixty times per hour:
A thousand tons of over-pending rock,
Detach'd by earthquake or electric shock,
From some high summit, towering mountain peak,
And downward plunging leaves its path a streak
Of smoke and debris as it cleaves its way
Through copes and thicket with terrific sway,
And sinks half buried in the plain below:
The foot-hills shudder when it strikes the blow.

This poem was intended to be grave throughout, but falling in with a group of humorous fancies, I was lured for a spell from the path that most becomes a man of seventy-three years.

G. S.

THE SUGAR-BUSH

This poem covers a period of eight years—from 1842 to 1850; and its scenes were enacted in the County of Middlesex, and on the north half of lot 14, concession 11, in the Township of Wolf—(well named), but better known by the Indian name Lobo.

February, 1907.

Not of the maple leaf, but of the tree,
My forest-nurtured Muse aspires to sing,
Touching the part it bore in early years,
In ministration to the needs of man.
The story never can be truly told,
Except by one who was himself a part
Of every scene pertaining to his theme;
Such now are few, and of that few am I;
And in all likelihood the only one
Cursed with the bent to write in verse or prose.
The story, therefore, must be told by me;
Or in oblivion forever lost.
My father's sugar-farm, when at its best

Comprised six hundred trees and twenty-five;
And none of them were saplings—few were less
Than fourteen inches in diameter;
The others graded upward to a yard:
Those of a yard diameter were few;
But they were grand old trees, and fill'd their troughs
Three times a day, when active frost at night
And sunny days call'd for their crystal blood.
These were not all we had; some hundreds more,
Though more remote, were kept as a reserve;
For every winter many splendid trees
Were sacrificed to make another field;
And then their troughs were moved to the reserves
And for each trough a new recruit enlisted.
It was a task herculean for one man
(With all his other labors) to supply
The equipage of such a sugar-camp;
And occupied some years ere it was done.

'Twas autumn when my father first assumed
The life and labors of the pioneer;
And soon as settled in his new log-house,
With oxen borrowed (for he yet had none)
He drew material from a black-ash swamp
Sufficient for a hundred sugar-troughs.
Although the winter evenings were long,
They were not long enough to meet his wish;
For their extremest length he occupied

By making sugar-troughs, before the fire.
His tools were few, but ample for his work—
A common axe and half-moon adze they were:
The adze was made to order by a son
Of lame old Vulcan, and a dip in Styx
Would have improved its temper; but its end
By frequent sharping it was made to serve.
When spring arrived, a hundred troughs and spiles
Were ready, waiting for propitious omens:
These, with a store-trough, and a ten-pail kettle,
And one of six and half a dozen pails,
With tins and pans of undetermined use
Made up our plant—and not a mean essay.
Now comes the time the boy too young to help
Feels an expanding interest in the camp,
And waits impatiently the sugar-off;
And though exempt from labor, can inclose
A large amount of scrapings of the pot:
But grudge him not the sweets that he enjoy'd;
Time his account has render'd—it did mine,
Which these hands paid with usury compound.
I got my sweets on trust for the first season
And for the second also, but before
Arrival of the third, the bill was render'd;
And I began to learn what sugar cost.
The first few sugar-offs of the first year
Were under an expert, who taught the art
"By precept and example" to my mother,
Who was henceforth the chemist of the camp;

And not the chemist only, but was all
That woman ever was, or is to be
By physical endurance and strong will:
Yet she was small and seemingly was frail;
But of that temperament that kicks aside
Whatever dares to intercept its will:
Such was my mother, and to her I owe
Whatever attributes I have of merit.
The sugar season past, a new supply
Of trough wood ample for two hundred troughs
Was from the swamp convey'd; and under roof
Composed of slabs, and by strong posts sustained.
The rainy days of summer were employ'd
In making troughs; and any little spell
That circumstances placed at his disposal
Was so employ'd: and such occur to all;
Although by few applied to any purpose.
When autumn came, another hundred troughs
Were ready for commission in due time;
Of these their sloping ends were smeared with pitch
To foil their liability to crack:
Those in the bush were treated in like mode,
Then lean'd (inverted) each against its tree.
Inverting of the trough against its tree,
And bringing home the spiles to be resharped
Completes the labor of the sugar-bush.
My father's labors, as a pioneer,
I have already sung; I therefore pass

What is not of my present theme a part.
The evenings of the second winter were
Those of the first repeated, and ere spring
His contemplated number was complete.
This winter added, also, to the plant
Another store-trough of unwonted size:
In this my father had the welcome help
Of a young nephew, who, disdaining hire,
Tendered his expert aid to the design;
And from a mammoth white-wood they evolved
What an old native call'd "Much big canoe":
And such it was; although too straight and blunt,
It would have served the purpose very well,
If in the hands of an expert canoeist.
The foresaid nephew lived at some duck-haunt,
(Its name I have forgotten) and was wont
To manufacture log canoes for sports;
And much he grieved that such a noble tree
Should fall for less than an artistic boat.
Now, when the second season is in sight,
Another ten-pail kettle is secured,
With which some trifles, ladles and the like,
Completes the second season's equipage.
We had no date for tapping—that depended
Upon the humor of the elements;
But if approximation had been sought
Inductively between the known extremes,
It had been found about the first of March.
In early winters, when the fields were small,
And forest wilds immense, the snow was deep;

And sheltered by the forest, lingered late;
And frequently when tapping time arrived,
The introduction to that work consisted
In breaking paths throughout the sugar-bush,
And sweeping from the troughs with whisk or broom
The cobwebs and cocoons of the last summer:
In this preparatory work, the house
Was requisition'd for what feet it had,
(Not in the cradle) whether boys or girls;
This call was met compliantly by all;
We youngsters thought path-breaking jolly fun;
And for a time it was, but nearing noon,
We waddled home demurely with no thought,
Save one or two that call'd the mind to dinner.
After a dinner and an ample rest,
The bugle sang "to arms," and we return'd—
Though not so buoyantly as in the morn,
And made the labyrinth of paths complete.
The trees were many on a rood, the soil
Was maple's choicest loam and rich and deep;
A startled buck could cover at a bound
The space that sunder'd many of the trees;
This brought the aggregate of beaten paths
Down to what linguists call a minimum.
I now renew in song an old-time camp:—
A giant tree is fell'd, a monster beech,
Or maple faulty as a sugar tree:
Against the fallen tree, two posts are planted
Deep in the earth, and let into the log

By notches cut to fit, that serve to brace;
The space between the posts may be twelve feet,
Or more or less according to the number
Of kettles in commission for the season;
The posts are forked on their upper ends
By which they bear a pole of ample strength
To bear the pendent kettles and their freight.
Another log, as large as can be handled
By all the force, is placed before the kettles,
And elevated from the ground by blocks
To let the air pass under and give draught:
The kettles hung and fill'd, await the fire!
Before the fire and distant a few feet
A rude protection from wet weather stands—
A roof of boards with one end on the ground,
The other held aloft by posts and pole;
The under surface of the roof reflects
The rays of heat, and makes it warm below.
This year ambition over-reached itself,
And tried to compass more than it was able;
Too many trees were tapped for any man
With but a woman for his help, to wield;
And other help was not available:
The other members of the house were yet
Too young for more than unimportant aid;
And when the season closed, a haggard pair—
Perhaps ten days upon a raft at sea,
With half a dozen biscuits and some water,
Might have reduced them to an equal state.
Henceforth for several years, or three or four,

The camp was stinted to a hundred trees
At the first tapping, but with the design
Of adding to that number when thought meet:
These years I overpass, save to observe
Some little things connected with the future.
About this time, a pair of little steers,
Two years of age, was added to the plant;
They soon were broken, and in their third year
Drew all the winter's wood, and went to mill.
From steers and boys and girls in Nature's time,
Oxen, young men, and women are developed;
And this my father, doubtless, kept in mind,
For he continued (though with milder zeal)
To add new troughs to his abundant store.
In autumn of eighteen and forty-five,
My father brought from London two small axes,
Not toys, or playthings, like George Washington's,
But implements of labor, three pounds each,
One for myself and for my brother one—
And fateful omens in disguise they were!
But we already were inured to labor
To the extreme that age and strength allow'd,
And welcom'd the new gifts with work-worn hands.
The youth of early years was not appraised
By age and strength alone, but more by skill
To wield the implements his work required;
And "train'd to arms" that forest heroes wield,
With intrepidity by skill inspired,

He never quail'd to front a hope forlorn.
The man of all trades, fertile in resources,
Was in demand, and held in high esteem;
But now has fallen into sad disgrace:
Now every man who seeks for skill'd employ,
Must show indenture of apprenticeship:
This may be very well; but any dolt
Can have the precepts of a trade rubbed in
In seven years, and yet remain a dolt.
The time is now at hand to see fulfill'd
My father's aspirations, in a camp
Without a rival in the neighborhood;
For which preparatory steps have been
In silent progress for three years or more:
His steers are grown to oxen, and his boys,
Though still but boys, are thoroughly inured
To every labor known in forest life.
In autumn prior to the first big camp,
Roads to accommodate a team and sleigh
Were through the bush survey'd, as seem'd most meet:
Small trees were grubbed, and hills were levell'd down;
And spots too low were rais'd and logs removed;
And all was done that could improve the roads:
And if I may anticipate their use,
They will (like railroads of the present day)
Have stations—points at which their own "express"
Will twice a day pull up, and take on freight.

Three wine pipes, holding fifty pails apiece,
Securely fix'd upon a low-built sled,
And by the oxen drawn, form the express;
To which the sap is brought in the old way
From all the trees that to that point belong:
And when the barrels are about half full
(Their weight approaching to an old-time ton)
Are driven to the camp, and then unloaded.
This saved the force a large amount of work;
But left us ample rugged exercise
To keep us warm without the aid of fire.
About the middle of the leap-year month,
The oxen, handled by the hand that writes,
Are put to work to draw, in large supplies,
Evaporating fuel for the camp:
And trees twelve inches in diameter,
Shorn of their limbs, are drawn to camp entire;
And laid abreast, and close as possible,
On every space not otherwise devoted.
This season is expected to give light
Touching how many trees the force can wield,
With all things possible anticipated.
A secondary end was also gain'd
By drawing out a large supply of wood;
The thoroughfares, or leading roads were broken,
And many others incidentally;
And round the camp, and all the bush at large
In plentitude betray'd the steps of man;
And less appear'd a savage wilderness.
Time flies apace!—and now the first of March

Comes with propitious omens to call forth
The eager tapper; from my forest home
Forth issue three, equipped with tools and spiles;
My brother goes ahead and makes the wound
Upon the sunny side, with due regard
Touching the best position for the trough;
Then father follows, and inserts the spile;
And I come last, and with my mother's broom
Sweep out the trough and put it in its place.
And after noon of the succeeding day
The last was tapped, of eight times fifty trees;
Meanwhile, the girls and mother were employ'd
Relieving troughs that were already full;
But passing such as yet could wait a while.
All omens now agreed that not too soon
The engine could be started; and at night
Four ten-pail kettles, aided by a six,
Began the process of evaporation:
And this was my first night in sugar camp—
The first of many that were yet to be.
And now the mill attains its normal speed.
Anticipation in our forest home,
No less than in the camp, has done its share:
Large stock of bread is baked and bacon boil'd,
For strength-sustaining lunches; for on such
Both strength and life must lean for a full month:
Save when a freak of weather seals the trees,
We may perhaps enjoy a few "square meals";
But no respite from labor, for our axes
Weary the forest echoes in the woodyard.

The ox-express is now in daily use,
Attended by all hands, save only mother,
Whose business is attendance on the fire,
And as her pleasure may, relieve the trees
Around the camp, contiguous thereto.
And now the camp's first sugar-off takes place:—
Aid me, ye Muses, the entire nine,
To sing this great event to boys and girls;
I need your utmost aid—with less will fail!
Now mother is "on deck," in camp attire—
In woollen gown and apron of oil'd canvas,
Her feet in strong and comfortable shoes,
And in a yellow handkerchief, her head.
One kettle was suspended by itself
From a projecting end of the same pole,
Intended for that purpose at the first.
The syrup made the last two days and nights
Is filtered through a strainer, that removes
All visible impurities therein;
The syrup, thus far purified, is then
Committed to the kettle, under which
The fire is immediately started:
And as the mass grows hot, the white of eggs
Or two or three are beaten well and added,
As being best of purifying agents;
And when the mass arrives at boiling heat
The microscopic atoms that a cloth
Could not arrest, now to the surface rise;
And by the skimming process are removed:
The syrup skimm'd, the heat is regulated

To keep it gently boiling, but no more.
A lump of hard-pressed snow of proper shape,
Or piece of ice, and generally both,
Are placed in readiness for time of need;
And when the ebullition is suggestive
Of little bombs exploding near the surface,
The snowball, firmly held by finger ends,
Is dipped an inch and instantly withdrawn;
A coat of sugar, very thin, adheres,
From which the snow at once absorbs the heat;
This coat is lightly struck with spoon or knife,
And if it flies like glass, the sugar's done;
And must at once be taken from the fire;
But if it dents and to the knife adheres
It is not done and must be longer boil'd;
And many snowball dips are often made
To catch the fatal moment when it comes—
For it is surely fatal if it come
A minute sooner than it is detected,
And writes upon the batch unbrandable.
This is the moment to the boys and girls;
But to the latter more than to the first;
They take their plenty from their mother's hand,
Fresh from the snowballs—most delicious sweets:
But that her boys be not neglected quite;
Unnecessary dips are often made;
But they are conscious that their turn's at hand,
And with due patience its arrival wait.
The sugar done, is taken from the fire,
And set aside and left to cool awhile;

And while it cools the moulds are put in trim:
The moulds are boxes of five pounds and ten,
Built on a bottom plant, of ample length,
Without the use of either nails or screws;
But cramps instead, and when they are relax'd,
The sides fall off and liberate the cakes.
The moulds in readiness and sugar eke,
Our mother with a ladle in right hand,
And in her left a pan to catch the waste,
Proceeds to fill the boxes, set at hand;
And when her ladle grates upon the bottom,
Remembers she the work, beyond their years,
Her boys have lightly fronted, night and day,
And of her approbation left a sign.
Hard work and surfeit go not hand in hand;
At least, they were not wont about this time;
For having gorg'd what storage would permit,
Disqualified us not for next occasion.
This sugar-off is typical of all;
And has been written with the utmost care
Regarding truth and fulness of detail,
And will not be repeated in my lay.
When sugar-trees have been in use ten days,
The taps assume a sear'd and aged look,
And sap exudes less freely than at first;
Then we perform'd the process of renewing:—
The tap was lengthen'd at the upper end,
And from the surface sear'd, a slice was cut:
About three times a season, this was done.
This camp is also typical of those

Predestined yearly to eventuate;
They differ not, except in magnitude;
Each being somewhat greater than the last,
In such proportion as the wielding force
Developed strength; until the largest camp
Involved six hundred trees and twenty-five;
And yielded half an old-time ton of sugar,
And table-syrup, ample for a year,
And of the best of vinegar, enough.
The sugar-season now attain'd its height;
And from its summit rapidly declined:
This was the issue of climatic change,
Due to encroachment on the native wild—
Despoliation of the scathful axe:
And heavy, yearly draining of the trees,
To militant conditions render'd aid,
To make the sugar-camp a thing that was.
And as against encroachment, a protest,
Or of the same a natural result,
That glorious phenomenon of autumn,
The Indian Summer, donn'd the yellow leaf;
And soon became a thing of memory—
To bless the ken of mortal nevermore!
The closing verses of my rustic lay,
My still belov'd and long-remember'd mother,
I dedicate in gratitude to thee;
Scant justice I have done thee heretofore;
But for no cause unworthy of thy son:
So many things pertaining to my theme
With insolent impatience urged their claims

To fitting place, and would not be denied:
But all demands abated, I am free
To make atonement to thy injured shade.
Vivacity unquell'd by petty cares,
And qualities ineffable of soul,
Made thee a fount of sunshine to our home.
The wild-wood echoes knew thy voice in song,
And oft prolong'd athwart their wild domain;
While the melodious cadence of thy lay
To mute enchantment lull'd its feather'd choir.
But thou wert not a votaress of the Muse;
Nor ever dream'd that thy maternal arms
A nestling poet to thy bosom prest:
But none the less, for all that is in me,
That is not to my shame, be thine the praise.
If in a long and meditative life
I had discern'd in others of the sex
A more exalted womanhood than thine,
I had not written these eulogic lines;
But nothing that experience has taught
Can quell the pride with which I hail thee, Mother!

DURATION AND SPACE

INTRODUCTION

This is a work of retrospective imagination under the title of the Muse. It is supposed to open at a remote period of dark and uneventful "Ancient Night"; long before duration was subjected to measurement by the great chronometers of Nature. Since boyhood, space has been a favorite playground of my fancy; but only a playground, for I never had the opportunity of crossing the threshold astronomy. At the age of seventy-two I thought to take leave of my old hunting-ground and its twin in a short hymn or ode; but not being able to suit myself or arrive at a fitting conclusion, I kept on and on, till the poem reached the length of 564 lines; and at this point, I leave it for what it is—not for what I would like it to be.

O ye Duration infinite and Space,
Twins that were never born! ye are the place
And time of all things; would I had the brain

To comprehend ye; but the wish is vain.
Pen has exhausted every other theme
On which the brain of man could vaguely dream;
But ye are yet unwritten save a thought
With which a line has now and then been fraught:
And have I the presumption to essay
So vast a theme with what success I may?
Ye are not of creation, for the term
Implies conditions that ye disaffirm
By your own vacancy, which to create
Can nothing more imply than to vacate,
And to vacate implies pre-occupation,
And further mystifies by complication:
Ye are not a creation; co-eternal
Ye are with Deity, if less supernal.
Since the remotest period of duration
A stygian night has held in occupation
Your vast abyss; while uneventful time
(Ineffably in either prose or rhyme)
Sped through the stygian vast; but this condition
Drew nearer to its end in the transition
Of darkness into light: for now creation
Was by Omnipotence in contemplation.
On your primeval state permit my gaze
Yet for a while; in that ye most amaze:
Such dread immensity and gloom of Hell
Intrance imagination in a spell
At once sublime and terrible, with awe
And terror, wanting impulse to withdraw.
Thus far has Fancy's retrospective flight

Furnished material on which to write;
And must continue so to serve my lay,
Through the deep vast of night and dawn of day;
Whence new-born science and its truths revealed
Material needful to my song may yield.
O Time, thou most ineffable of things,
Though represented oft as borne on wings,
Thou art not less intangible to mind
Than to the hand of man, and to the blind
Not more invisible, than to the eye
Of undiminished power to descry.
Oblivion was your secretary through
The reign of Night, and had not much to do.
Space and Duration, to achieve what end
Are ye the chosen means, and thither tend?
Is there diffused throughout your gloomy vast
Some subtle thing—some viewless protoplast,
On whose fertility Omnipotence
Waits the development, ere He commence
His contemplated labor of creation;
And from primeval night, the reformation?
If I may draw comparison between
Great things and small, as heretofore has been:
Thus may the lord of an exhausted field,
From which he cannot hope a fruitful yield,
Let it lie waste, for Nature to restore
Its wonted fruitfulness of soil before
Demanding ample payment for his toil
Upon, and seed invested in, the soil.
O Space! in what subtility of sense

Is your alliance to Omnipotence?
If I on this had light—if this I knew,
I could with more intelligence pursue
My most intricate theme; but further light
Is not for man while ye are yet in Night:
Ye may be a dependency—and such
I shall assume ye are, and err not much,
I hope, in the assumption; but I must
Assign ye some position that I trust
May dissipate confusion, that I may
Along the path of reason pick my way.
If ye are a dependency, I pray
Where dwells the sovereign power to whom ye pay
The tribute of submission, or abides
He in this waste, or in what place besides?
In some remote location is His throne,
Illumed by His own presence, and to none
Accessible, save the angelic host
Attendant on His person; and who post
Through this drear waste as ministers of fate,
And every wish of the Supreme abate?
Or in some mighty sun does He reside
Whose beams are shorn of distance and denied
Their utmost flight, restricted to a zone
Or sphere of light encompassing His throne?
To these interrogations no reply
Do ye vouchsafe lest ye intensify
Man's curiosity and further feed
His wish to know beyond what God decreed;
But be ye not alarmed; it is the Muse

Who thus interrogates, what ye refuse
To man, not yet created; but to be
As foreordained in ancient prophecy.
'Tis said Omnipotence of old foredoomed
That the dark vast of space would be illumed;
That many suns and vast He would create;
And worlds to circle round them and rotate
On their own axes, making night and day
The consequence; and opening the way
To animal existence, chiefly man,
Though not the first, the chiefest in His plan;
And in this ancient fiat it is said
That secondary planets would be made,
To circumvolve the greater satellites
Reflecting solar rays; that in the nights
Of darkness they would serve as lesser suns,
For man's behoof; for so the fiat runs.
Whence His material he will derive;
Or by what potent energy contrive
To wield the massive elements, is known
To Him, and to His engineers alone.
And now the "Muse" ere now unknown to blunder
To the near future gives the greatest wonder
That time will ever know—the transformation
Of darkness into light, by the creation
Of suns immense; and planets to attend
On these great luminaries, to the end
Of being fertilized by light and heat
That in their radiant beams so wisely meet.

Old Might, the sceptre of your old empire
Is slipping from your grasp: you must retire
To a remote location which though large
Is not a tithe of your primeval charge;
And in the centre of your realm shall dwell
The regent of a regency, called Hell:
But from the need and nature to explain,
The Muse prefers, at present, to refrain.
And now the Muse, Duration, turns to thee—
In past, in present and futurity:
But of the past, how little can be said?
In silent uneventfulness it sped
Into oblivion, its fated tomb;
To which the present tends in equal gloom,
With equal uneventfulness; but ye
For no regret have cause: futurity
For present and for past amends will bring
And give the Muse her choice of what to sing.
The Muse long ruminating in the past
Turns on futurity her gaze at last;
And with prophetic eye explores the gloom
Where in embryo lie events to come.
Of what event approaching may the news
Be first expected? say, celestial Muse:
And thus the Muse makes answer; the creation,
Of ancient prophecy the confirmation;
And after meet duration, that of man,
The last, nor least, of His creative plan:
Then after brief duration comes man's fall—
The one deplorable event of all.

At this amazement thrills the hosts on high,
Save God alone (from whose foreseeing eye
The Muse derives her foresight), who foresaw
The fall of man; but interposed no law.
After the fall of man, the human race,
As was intended, multiplies apace;
In this man is obedient. From his crime
Will come the bent of all events of time:
And with the deeds of man, our present theme,
Duration, soon will plentifully teem:
Eventfulness will soon necessitate
Another secretary, who by fate
Has been already chosen, and his name
Through all succeeding ages will be Fame:
Fame and Oblivion will sort the mail,
And grade its missives by befitting scale:
Straight to his cave Oblivion some may send;
But greater numbers thitherward will tend
By long, circuitous route, and meet delay
From countless, nameless causes on the way:
Like birds of prey, the scavengers of news
Pursue the wing'd reports and pick and choose
For what may suit their purpose to create
The latest scandle or sensation great;
But howsoever hash'd, they gravitate
Back to Oblivion, their final state.
The great events of time will be by Fame
Kept in a lofty tower with the name
Of History engraved above the door;
And there they will continue evermore,

The Muse cannot prophetically sing
A tithe of the events that time will bring;
Be it sufficient to observe a few
Of greatest moment, fated to ensue:
War, pestilence and famine and the fall
Of cities and of empires; and of all
The countless shapes of death deriving birth
From these; of which there never will be dearth.
And now the Muse puts on her wont attire,
And doffs the mantle of prophetic fire;
And briskly hastens to a point between
Events about to be, and what have been,
To wait developments, and be on hand,
When the Supreme pronounces his command:
"Let there be light." The Muse with awe beheld
The great phenomenon of darkness quell'd
Throughout the vast of space; but by what way,
She either knows not, or declines to say.
When God commanded light, He was obey'd;
Whether at once, or for a while delay'd
Awaiting the development of cause
For the effect desired, as later laws
Of Nature might require, was not reveal'd
To mortal man; and lies not in the field
Of his investigation; hence will be
Through all succeeding time a mystery.
As time approached for this supreme transition
Suns may have been roughcast in meet position;
Suns immature, but fraught with latent light
In beams developing for future flight;

That when the word of evocation came,
Shot forth their latest energy of flame.
Creative labor having now begun,
New worlds will soon encircle every sun;
And every world by satellite or moon
Will be attended; and the afternoon
Of God's last day of labor will behold
Fulfilment of His promise made of old.
When solar beams explored his gloomy void,
Old Night retreated, but was not destroyed;
A region far remote and long designed
To serve such end, was now to him assigned—
A region so remote, great suns appear
As little twinkling stars at the frontier,
That shed no ambient, effective light,
To call forth protest from the throne of night:
Here silence dwells and darkness so profound,
That solar beams impinging might rebound
From its opacity, as from a wall
Of rock, the archer's blunted arrows fall:
Far into this abyss, an erring world—
An astral outlaw—with intent was hurled;
Divorced from all affinity to rest
On its own balance, by decree unblest:
A sulphury atmosphere less deep than dense
Infolds the orb, and burns with heat intense,
Of nonconsuming fire, that sheds no light,
Save to engender terror and affright
By images grotesque and shapes that dance
Before the wildered fancy and enhance

The horrors of each moment. This is Hell;
Here Satan and his fallen angels dwell,
And the unblest of man, from Adam's fall,
Through time ensuing; but there's room for all.
Satan, himself, may roam, as suits him best,
But unrelenting Fate constrains the rest
Within the element from which they reap
The harvest of their sins, and moan and weep.
Time is duration measured—days and years—
And it has now begun; the newborn spheres
Are measuring duration day by day;
But many years are yet to roll away
While they are in probation and maturing
For different ends intended and inuring
To their own functions, with the incubation
Of latent life inherent, in gradation
From crawling life to highest that may be,
Whose haunts inclose no interdicted tree.
Could I the mysteries of world formation
Unfold in numbers worthy such narration,
I would all other themes of song forego;
But these are secrets not for man to know,
While yet sojourning in his mortal state—
Whate'er enlightenment on death may wait.
But little he can say who little knows
Of Nature's great chronometers, and those
Immeasurable magazines of light,
And heat and colors that entrance the sight;
As manifest in the celestial arc,
First seen, as said, from Noah's stranded ark;

But its prismatic qualities remain'd
Unknown for ages, until man attain'd
Sufficient insight into Nature's laws
To understand and demonstrate the cause;
But many still regard it as the sign
Of pledged immunity from wrath divine:
But earth's exemption from another flood
Little avails to either bad or good;
For war, plague, earthquake, famine and cyclone
Assume its functions, and its want atone.
The wonders of creation may be sung,
But not in language of the human tongue;
But seraph minstrels that attend the throne
Of the celestial Architect alone.
Creation of a sun, although inert,
Proclaims an Architect no less expert
Than one omnipotent; and in behoof
Of God's omnipotence yon sun is proof:
But many things less striking to the sense
Are not less worthy of omnipotence;
Though less in magnitude, they may atone
By higher essence, as the precious stone
Outvalues many times its weight in gold—
And that a precious bane to get or hold.
Doctors on nerves can learnedly debate,
And grave philosophers expatiate
Upon refracted and reflected rays,
And strike unlettered rustics with amaze;
But of the enginery of conscious sight,
The human brain, the visual nerve and light,

Of each, the functions and the reason why,
And how performed, they know no more than I.
But if there be a thing that man may call
The greatest work of God, transcending all,
It is the nursery of human thought,
The seat of mind, with mental vision fraught,
The brain of man—come forth, who can explain
The mystic language of the mind and brain.
Man's mental qualities suggest the end
For which he was created may extend
To other worlds; and may we not suppose
On some of many worlds (and science shows
That not a few of them surpass our own
In magnitude) the race is not unknown?
If this hypothesis could be sustain'd,
Or negatived, some knowledge would be gain'd;
But as it stands, I am but a surmiser,
So may my readers say, and they no wiser
For having read my verse; but censure not—
Without the warring winds, the sea would rot—
Surmises may be fruitful, they may lead
To truth; although not likely to succeed
In this our case, but let us still surmise,
And all our visions scan through reason's eyes.
I am not done surmising—bear in mind
My song is of imaginative kind,
Nor is the minstrel less, and as the tree
The fruit developing may tend to be.
This world belongs to man, and how he came,
Is told in Holy Writ, and noised by fame;

But if the occupant of any other,
How came he there? Came he as Adam's brother?
Assigned to Eden new, with no restraint,
Save that from which derives our mortal taint?
If so, there is a lady in the case—
Sister of Eve, essential to a race—
And for the sake of her posterity,
May she keep hands off the forbidden tree:
But snakes and devils crowd into the mind,
And make a medley that leaves reason blind;
So hoping for the best results, we leave
And turn to worlds that have no handmade Eve.
But may not human life derive its birth
From principles inherent to the earth?
From latent, vital energy may man
Not be developed to the sovereign
Of any world or all, as they arrive
At fit condition for the race to thrive?
For such mysterious birth in life below
We have not long to seek, or far to go:
The artificial lake, by land enclosed,
Ere long develops every fish disposed
To waters similar; while from no spawn
Of predecessor they derive the dawn
Of their vitality: man's higher station
Carries no weight against such generation
In his own element, or any other
Chosen by Nature for his foster-mother:
Life is but life in its initial stage;
For what man is, he's debtor to his age—

While we can but surmise, along this line,
The search for light will ever more incline.
Adaption to conditions seems akin
To evolution; but it takes not in
The individual, the race or breed,
And nothing less, it condescends to heed:
Examples of adjustment of our race
In every common atlas finds a place—
The European in the centre stands,
And on his left and right the lower brands—
And all the islands of the southern seas
Furnish examples similar to these;
And e'en the region of the polar bear
Shows adaptation to conditions there.
Lo! the great saurian, with fins or feet
As his necessities may make most meet;
With savage teeth, and then with toothless jaws,
And the conditions of his life the cause:
He cut his teeth when enemies appear'd,
To shed them later when the seas were clear'd
Of his antagonists; he seemed to need
Them more to urge his arguments, than feed;
But jaws like his, though toothless, could with ease
Grind into pulp whatever they might seize.
He was the terror of the seas of old,
Dreaded wherever briny billows roll'd;
But all that's left of forty feet of saurian
Are ten of crocodile—says his historian.
We call this adaptation retrograde;

And hope it may continue till the said
Ten feet have been adapted down to two—
Enough for us, and even less would do.
What I have written of this ocean beast,
I drew from periodicals that feast
Their reader on such essays now and then,
From their chief savants, or sciential men;
And if what I have said be not correct,
I ask the pardon of the derelict.
Back to immense immensity I turn,
More eager far than hopeful to discern
Some fit material with which to freight
A few more verses of a standard weight:
But with so many rolling worlds in sight
Of naked eye on any cloudless night,
There should not be a dearth of fit material,
Of which the Muse could a song ethereal;
But from appearance little can be drawn
Touching the so-called stars—from dusk to dawn
They glitter from afar, and we survey
The brilliant scene, and query what are they?
But science has enough already shown
To justify belief that like our own
These brilliants are; but for our weal or woe
Omnipotence forbids us more to know.
But who can tell what in the future lies—
What Heaven decrees for man's unique surprise—
Holds for the crowning feat of human brain
To penetrate, and to the world explain;
As Galileo, whom mistrustful Rome

Doom'd for his life a prisoner in his home,
And deem'd the sentence more than justified
By the rank heresy he strove to hide
Under the veil of science, which the Devil
Suggested to veneer the latent evil:
But after ages did the Pope upbraid,
And all atonement possible was made.
Wonders have been, and greater yet may wait
The day predestined in the scroll of Fate;
For why should Heaven forbid that man should know
More than enough to fill his cup of woe?
Of which the rape of the forbidden tree
The fountain of supply is said to be.
Knowledge of good and evil was the state
Promised the young immortals, if they ate;
But immortality, their Maker vows
Shall be the forfeit for its ravished boughs:
Man from the first edict, his moral laws,
And from the last, his mortal nature, draws.
The first conviction that the rape impress'd
Was that they both were *à la mode* undress'd;
And how they strove to mitigate their plight,
Has long been numbered with the stories trite.
(Perhaps Ulysses, in the selfsame strait,
The story held in memory, as he sate
Beneath the olive shade from which he rent
The fittest branches that the arbor lent,
And with innate dexterity around
His swarthy loins the leafy cinctures bound.)

But midst the rolling spheres I more delight
To roam in spirit, than of fables write;
In early life they first my wonder drew,
And with maturing mind, that wonder grew:
Unlearn'd in books, and immature of mind,
Imagination strove some bounds to find,
And to encompass in a vast embrace
Of mental vision, the extent of space:
Vain the endeavor! yet not wholly vain;
For space was my gymnasium of the brain;
And in that field I learned to concentrate
My thoughts on matters of material weight.
It was in autumn of my twentieth year,
Harvest was over, and the fields were sear;
To harvest-home the palest lamb had bled,
And custom was atoned, and my young head
Was full of the adventures of the chase—
As had for several autumns been the case;
When lo! all unannounced there came in view
A grand knight-errant of the pathless blue—
A brilliant comet; I've seen others since,
But none that rivalled its magnificence.
Celestial Messenger, all hail to thee!
On what great errand through immensity
Art thou commission'd? Such was the salute
My soul accorded, though my tongue was mute.
Touching the name by which it was denoted,
Shakespeare's old query might be aptly quoted—
But as already threadbare by quotation,
I quote it not, save by insinuation—

Its essence, nature, mission were the quest
On which I ponder'd to my own unrest:
Not expectation of some latent truth
Inspired my ardor, but the zeal of youth—
The tireless energy of brawn and mind
That once was mine, but age has left behind.
I view'd it every evening till the sun
Had through the Balance and the Scorpion run;
And then through billions of leagues of space
It grew too dim for naked eye to trace:
Then with a last adieu (no less sincere*
Than to my dying mother, who was dear
To me as my young life) I turn'd away,
To wish for its return until to-day.
Now turn we to the family of spheres
That from our sun derive their days and years:
What are the powers of Nature that restrain
Those vast projectiles, and their poise maintain?
Man thinks he knows, and peradventure may;
But whence their prime impellent, can he say?
"Nature abhors a vacuum" once was taught—
Nature abhors inertia may be thought
By some a fitting answer to the quest;
But answer more scientific seek the rest.
Centrifugal and centripetal forces,
(The spur and curb on planetary courses)

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*NOTE.—The passage in brackets implies equal absence of mockery but *not* equal intensity of emotion.—G.S.

May keep the general poise; but are not shown
To keep the equilibrium alone:
Other affinities may lend a hand,
In countervailing duties, and command
A safer equilibrium than can be
Without the aid of such auxiliary:
Planets are magnets; and we pitch our tent
On this assumptive base of argument;
And being such, they must in consequence,
Throughout their course, magnetic zeal dispense
And who can tell what may not be assigned
To power no less ineffable than mind.
Dissimilar polarity, or sex
Of polar action, may perhaps perplex
Philosophers for aye; but he who will'd
It so to be, sees every end fulfill'd.
Perchance (although improbable) these powers
Were special favors to this world of ours;
For man to first discover, then essay
To his own needs as his acumen may:
He has tentatively discovered friends
In these antagonists, and to his ends
Tentatively applied then with success,
And promises of greater usefulness.
But these are but suggestions, and intended
To make the reader think (as often pen did)
The writer was a fool, or he had shown
More knowledge of a theme so well unknown.
If all neighboring worlds are yet unmann'd,
And like our own in surface—sea and land—

Alternate tracts of ocean and of plain,
And fertilized like ours by sun and rain,
The pine and pulpwood forests that are there
Would make the votaries of corruption stare;
And in all probability to use
Language too forceful for the pious Muse:
But if approachable by scathful axe,
On easy royalty or stumpage tax,
Immense corruption funds and leaders' pickings,
Would leave rich scratching ground for lesser
chickens.
Ye Goddesses, that erst in dread alarms,
From Vulcan's forge brought down celestial arms,
To arm your chosen leaders, can you not
Bring down some pine and pulpwood—a big lot—
To furnish sinews for our party strife,
In which to perish means not loss of life?
But every attribute of heart and mind
That man should cherish in himself and kind:
The strife is urged by office—hungry hounds,
Whose acts nor law, nor shame, nor honor bounds.
Feed ye their greed from forests that can spare,
And yet have plenty—ours are plundered bare;
It matters not which party is supplied;
Or one or both as may yourselves decide—
Or Grit or Tory, it avails not which,
Both graceless whelps of the same graceless bitch,
Corruption. Hear ye my unselfish prayer,
And grant (if Jove permits) Celestial Fair.

—Nov. 5th, 1906.

NOTE.—The last thirty lines of this poem do not properly belong to the subject, and are an adjunct. I have been a voter ever since I was twenty-one years of age, and never cast a Conservative vote in my life; but after the reign of Oliver Mowat I began to lose faith in the Liberal party; and the fall of the Ross Government gave my faith the first heavy blow. The Gamey incident gave it the next shock; for I firmly believe that some noted Liberals were not guiltless in that affair. If the Liberals were not guilty, why was Gamey not unseated? The only answer that I can find is—they dare not unseat him. While each party was grasping for the throat of the other, there was a line that neither dare cross; and the unseating of Gamey was on the forbidden side of that line. The last straw necessary for the breaking of my political vertebral column was furnished by the investigation of political frauds in London.

G. S.

THE PIONEER OF ONTARIO

INTRODUCTION

At the time this poem was begun the "Eastern Question," which I understood to be a tangle among the Balkan States, was agitating Europe; and the champion craze was doing the same for Canada—hence the opening lines. The first fifty or sixty lines of the poem are introductory, and treat of athletic sports. These lines will not please all. I therefore wish to make it plain just where I stand touching the sentiment in the said lines. In my youth, and later, I was an enthusiast in hunting deer, and fur animals, and felt a pride in my physical endurance. Such a man is not likely to become a foe to athletic sports—nor have I. On all annual holidays and all special holidays, and all exhibition times, athletic games and sports are proper; and I give them my hearty support. But when the athletic sentiment attains that intensity that makes college students take more interest in their games than their studies—

and when a dozen young men travel round the world playing a school-boy's game—then I think the time has come to "call a halt." To all who differ in opinion on this subject I have only this answer to make: "I love brawn not less than you, but brain more"—Brutes Atoned.

In my song of toil I have some reference to the condition of the emigrant in the Old Country before emigrating to Canada. My authority for what I have said on this subject is the statements of my father to his family, supported by other emigrants whom I heard speak of the subject, and the declaration of an autocratic noble whose name I have forgotten:

"Man begins with the rank of baron"; this implies that all below baronial dignity are only cattle; and as such to be treated, and hunted with bloodhounds if they dare to aspire above the level to which he has assigned them. This alone is enough to justify all that I have said of the subject; and that is not intended to apply as late as the reign of Victoria.

At the time "The Pioneer" was written illustration in newspapers had not entered upon the epidemic stage, through which it is now passing, and I had never seen and never heard of a log-house on paper; therefore, in my description of the pioneer's first log-house I took special care to do it fully and correctly. But since then—since the settlement of the Northwest and the development of the illustration craze, the log-house has become a common picture in the Mounted Police and

Hudson's Bay Co. literature—or any literature into which it can be made to fit. This renders my description seemingly unnecessary; but only seemingly so. The illustration craze will pass, and its pictures will perish, and then my picture will come to the rescue of the log-house—the house in which the happiest as well as the most laborious part of my life was spent.

No eastern legend does the Muse relate,
No "Eastern Question" gives her numbers weight;
Nor of the belted champion of the ring,
Nor the regatta she aspires to sing:
To celebrate athletic feats in song
To champions of the art alone belong;
To such I leave the duty—save to say
A little in an introductive way.
This is an age of champions; this a land
Whose pride is feats athletic; they command
The plaudits of the people, and amaze,
And bar and drawing-room resound their praise.
First, the great Hanlan, champion of the oar,
With were and would-be champions half a score;
Then come the chiefs of pugilistic sleight,
The heavy gladiator and the light:
What though their feats are disavow'd by law,
Admiring crowds from every class they draw!
To these succeed a miscellaneous host,

Each making some athletic feat his boast;
The runner, walker, wrestler and the man
Who heaves a greater stone than others can:
The light-weight champion faster, Dr. Tanner,
Who starved his loving wife till he could span her·
And persecuted to her last resource,
She sued in vain for dumplings, then divorce.
Such are the feats that circle far and wide,
A country's honor and a champion's pride,
Till e'en the fair are smitten with the craze,
And run like fillies in their lust of praise.
If brain to brawn must yield its wonted sway,
And strength of mind to that of limb give way,
Shall useful labor be denied a claim,
And feats and capers lift a fool to fame?
If so the rabble wills, far be it known
The Muse protests, though she protest alone:
But what avails magnanimous protest,
Not in familiar billingsgate address'd;
For by the herd the language of the Muse,
The most congenial she would stoop to use,
Would be as little felt, and understood
As by the redskin rangers of the wood.
But if a few, however few, remain,
Not smitten yet by champion-on-the-brain,
To these I sing. The forest pioneer,
(Euphonic name to my Canadian ear)
Who with undaunted heart and sinewy hand,
From howling wilds reclaim'd this teeming land;
Himself, his mate, their sorrows and their joys,

Their blooming girls and forest-nurtured boys,
Shall be my theme—and all my own, I trow;
For who besides would such a theme avow;
Not that it is intriniscally low;
But what avails, when fashion dubs it so?
Not on Canadian scenes first ope'd his eyes
To whom the title of my lay applies;
An alien in the land he sought to share—
He and the partner of his bosom were—
Born in a land that yet to peasant gave
No foot of earth, not even for a grave—
Not even for a grave, the nameless plot
Receiving fresh consignments as they rot:
Where erst the son beheld the sire inurn'd,
Himself to native elements return'd.
Kingdom of kingdoms—vast entail'd domains,
O'er each of which a subject monarch reigns;
Whose every wish is fraught with sovereign weight
To all who till and toil on his estate:
Yet while they meekly bow to his behest,
Hate, fear and envy rankle in the breast.
The cause of fear and envy may be found
To spring, like nearly all things, from the ground;
Their hatred chiefly pleads this other cause,
And justifies itself by Nature's laws,
That on his fellow-man to labor born
His blandest look is undiluted scorn.
A land by Mammon more than monarch ruled;
Yet by the last to patient suffering school'd;

And by no mock encounters school'd to know
The sleight of arms without a foreign foe.
Where man finds refuge from his want of worth
In sounding titles and distinguish'd birth—
Fit ornaments with which to vest an ass
As chaplain royal to a king on grass.
Where worth without estate is rarely heeded,
And in alliance with more rarely needed
To purchase social standing, from the crown
Through all gradations of distinctions down.
Land that abhors the poor man; where a breath
Of its patrician atmosphere is death—
Death to his manhood; the dismantled frame
Takes some ignoble, scorn-begotten name;
Where "man begins with baron"; hence the throng*
Beneath baronial rank to him belong:
For was not he by Heaven assigned to reign
O'er all beneath him over land and main?
He was—and had the sceptre not been given
He would have snatch'd it from the grasp of Heaven!
God help the poor, where sophistry and pride,
And lust of power o'er man's estate preside!
Of those from birth in meek submission nursed,
By social wrongs and civil doubly cursed—

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*This is the language of an autocrat of Europe whose name I have forgotten: "Man begins with the rank of baron."

From age to age oppress'd to the estate
Of cringing flunkeys to the so-call'd great,
How few are they of soul to realize
Their low abasement, or aspire to rise!
But here and there is one of plebeian birth,
Who is not only locomotive earth;
Who feels as Nature will'd the human kind,
And thinks as causes move the reasoning mind;
And fitter far his birthplace to adorn
Than man to all but manly virtues born.
His mean condition kindles a desire,
(More to escape from wealth than to acquire)
To seek a kinder, more congenial zone,
Where pedigree and pomp are yet unknown;
Where man is still appraised, as erst he was,
By what he is, and not by what he has;
Where men aspire to be instead of seem,
And scorn to offer virtue feign'd esteem.
Just as the stag pursued by horse and hounds
Who sees afar a rocky barrier bounds
His range of vision, glancing left and right
He seeks from death an avenue of flight;
So from the hounds and hunters of his race
He seeks an avenue to foil the chase;
Exerts his mental eye on lands afar,
And weighs his chances there with what they are,
And what they ever can be in a state
Of base subjection to the landed great.
He has no wealth to lose, his stake is life,
That of himself, his little ones and wife;

Which could be only to advantage lost
If not to happier home the main is cross'd.
Resolved at length no longer to forego
Whate'er the venture yields, or joy or woe,
With fond regrets to home and kindred due,
He bids his native land a last adieu;
In savage lands, across the waters wide,
He seeks the blessings that his own denied.
A small estate to all intents his own,
To sow and reap, and share the fruit with none;
From yearly rent and feudal tenure free
While seasons roll, or rivers to the sea;
With laws that recognize in rich and poor
An equal claim to blessings they secure:
These are the jewels purposed to be won,
By heavy labors to be yearly done.
His western goal attain'd, his eye survey'd
No land of refuge fancy would have made;
But clad in heavy forest, sear or green,
Dard, lone, and wild as it had ever been,
Since Nature vested in a barren earth
The latent germ of vegetable birth:
Save here and there along its eastern bound
An infant settlement embower'd he found;
Where two or three, by hardship undismay'd,
The corner-stone of future wealth had laid.
At one of these, or where he found the soil
He thought most meet to recompense his toil,
He chose a lot to which no prior claim
Was found on record, and possess'd the same.

But ere a stump avow'd the human mind
Had occupation of the land design'd,
Anticipated famine dispossess'd
His hopeful foresight, and usurped his breast;
He hears his children cry for bread in vain,
And feels, himself, the want that they complain;
Conceives himself to fruitless toil betray'd
By flowers of promise that untimely fade.
School'd to endurance as he was, he quail'd
To view the Alps of hardship to be scaled.
Nor far remote the steep, to entertain,
And be surmounted by, ingenious brain
At most convenient periods, when the mind
To rugged, Alpine exercise inclined;—
No; at his feet began the upward toil,
Of which laborious sinew claims the spoil.
The heavy forest to be fell'd by hand,
Reduced and spread in ashes on the land;
The mass of debris to be raked and burned,
And to the earth from which it came, return'd;
Logs to be split, with which to fence the field,
Which to corporeal strength would never yield;
But here he has resource to power of mind,
In duplication of the plane inclined;
But still the labor is a toil indeed;
Mind only aids him in his sorest need—
When all his strength exerted is too frail,
And without some resource would surely fail,
Mind then approaches in its rudest dress,

With just enough of aid to give success.*
If with the labor mention'd, what remains,
Before a field could recompense his pains,
Be justly weigh'd calculation's scale,
One-half would make the boldest novice quail.
Nor be it granted to our Hero's shame,
Whose chief resource was in a sinewy frame,
With many years of hardship to endure,
Ere he could dare to deem himself secure
From future want, and keep from day to day
Through these laborious years, the "wolf" away,
That when the task herculean he survey'd,
His first emotions were of one dismay'd.
But Hope immortal is, and though cast down,
Renew'd the conflict and retrieved the crown:
From the achievements of the rest he drew
Incitant inference, and assurance new;
And that which they had done, resolved to do:†
And to the building of a house address'd

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*The mechanical powers alluded to are the inclined plane in the wedge and skid and the lever in the handspike.

†I remember hearing my father state that when he first surveyed the heavy timber on the lot he had chosen to settle on, he was completely overwhelmed with despair for a time, but recovered his wonted fortitude in contemplating the progress made by the few settlers who had been there for a year or two.

Himself with new-born energy; the rest
With willing hands assist to raise the wall,
As had in turn been done to each and all.
To build a house in numbers is a toil
From which a Muse like mine might well recoil;
But as the labor falls across my way
I'll swerve not from it till I first essay.
The walls were logs, the issue of the ground,
As straight and uniform as could be found
Within a radius of a furlong round:
The wooden border of a slate I'll call
The bottom round—foundation of the wall,
Of which the logs are round, and where they meet
Are joined by method call'd the notch and seat;
The upper log is cut nigh half way through,
As though designed to have been cut in two,
The lower made to fit, and every round
Is thus securely in position bound;
Thus round on round is added to a height
Adjudged for comfort and convenience right.
The intervening seams are fill'd with clay
Kneaded laboriously with straw or hay
Cut in short lengths: it taxes all his care,
About the corners, to exclude the air;
But when complete, though less genteel, is warm
As any cottage on an English farm.
But not by rafters is the roof sustain'd;
By means more simple is the end attain'd:
By further elevation of the wall,
Of which the side-logs used are very small;

And from each other sunder'd not so wide,
But tending to the centre from each side,
At each succeeding round a half a stride,
Or more or less to give the pitch desired,
For by such means alone it is acquired.
The gable logs grow shorter, and each pair
Of poles less distant than the lower were;
Till the diminished space admits but one,
And then the crowning ridge-pole is put on.
Thus fall the sides together till they meet
In the said ridge-pole, making both complete.
The gable logs are chamfer'd at each end
To let the roof a foot or so extend;
So that the intersections that retain
Too long the wet, are shielded from the rain.
Supported thus a clapboard roof supplies
His sole protection from inclement skies;
From rib to rib the boards in length extend;
And in a double row from end to end;
The lower end in every higher row
O'erlaps the higher in the next below;
So that the rain by gravity is sped
From row to row till at the eaves is shed.
Wide slabs and white of basswood form the floor,
Hew'd on the upper side and on the lower
Sized to an equal thickness on the beams
To make the surface even at the seams;
The length and breadth of which when all complete
May be eighteen by four and twenty feet;

But this includes the celebrated hearth,
Renown'd afar for social wit and mirth,
An elevation of the ground laid o'er
With smooth, flat stones, and even with the floor.
Through two half windows Sol dispenses light,
His trust devolving on a fire by night;
Of which a spacious chimney built of clay
Diffuses heat and leads the smoke away.
A door of basswood lumber, with its string
And latch of which I'm not the first to sing,
And wooden hinges, less genteel than strong
Restores the perished tenement in song.
Such was his forest home as first possess'd;
And like belongings also were its best
Chair, table, settle, sideboard, all were made
By his own hand unpractised in the trade;
And being all of undistinguished wood,
None branded other with ignoble blood.
His labor done, within its lowly walls
The partner of his lot he next instals.
And when with sceptre of domestic sway,
The broom of hickory time has swept away,
She swept the builders' debris from the floor,
She swept her own—she never had before—
Which render'd more than ample recompense
For want of evenness and elegance
And in the absence of artistic grace
Throughout the tenement, supplied the place.
What liveried flunkey of emblazon towers,
Who in a master's presence shrinks and cowers,

Would envy not this home, if such there be,
Bless'd be the fate who gave him not to me,
She mused, as in the corners of the floor
She ranged their chattels and supplies in store;
While little imps with wonder-beaming eyes
Propounded queries, and received replies.
Anon the father, conscious of his need
Of early action if he would succeed,
Begins to underbrush the future field
Designed the earliest fruits of toil to yield:
The fallen trees in process of decay
He cuts in sections to be haul'd away;
And piles their limbs in heaps and others blown
From standing trees upon the heaps are thrown.
The saplings less than half a yard in girth,
Down to the smallest issue of the earth,
He sivers at the earth and then divides
The tree in sections as the length provides,
And throws them on the heaps, till on the ground
An able Jehu might career around.
This done, the larger trees must take their turn;
For all are destined in the spring to burn.
And now the earth its annual course has run
Till Sagittarius next receives the Sun:
The summer birds are gone; the forest trees
Commit their faded foliage to the breeze,
To be diffused abroad and carpet o'er
The rotten issue of the year before.
The forest fruits are ripe; upon the ground
Nuts, oak and hickory and the beech, abound;

And water plums, varieties that grow
Along the little streams of margin low,
Lie thick beneath the trees on which they grew,
And the wild apple 'neath its species too.
The grape-vine woven with the elms is bare,
Or leaf or cluster hanging here and there;
Whose wealth of foliage through the summer days
The warbler shelter'd from the noon-tide blaze.
The season is at hand in which the bear
Seeks for his old or new hibernal lair;
The coon a hollow tree in which to lay,
And, fasting, sleep a polar night away:
The hungry wolf averse to such a fast,
Nor less unwilling to regale on mast,
Pursues the flying deer through winter's snow,
In howling packs recruited as they go:
The new recruits as eager of the prey
As are the rest, and less fatigued than they,
Outstrip the yelling pack, and urge the chase,
And on the panting victim gain apace.
And should the deer, averse to quit the ground,
Flee in a spacious circle round and round,
The howling leaders warn the distant rear
To quit the trail and head the circling deer.
Adroitly headed off by half a score,
With twice as many in pursuit or more,
The panting victim halts a single breath
Between the raving ministers of death;
Not far behind he hears them on the trail,
Before he sees them mustering to assail;

And with the utmost strength that fear supplies,
Or right or left again for life he flies:
But flies in vain—he might as well have stood
A willing offering to the fiends of blood;
His limbs no longer equal to the speed
Of which his safety has the sorest need,
The gaining prowlers mark with hungry eye
The lagging prey, and with each other vie.
The chase prolong'd through half a winter night,
Spurr'd on by long unabated appetite,
Is nearly o'er; the foremost of the pack
Seizing the prey, a moment holds it back,
And reinforced immediately they throw
The struggling victim prostrate in the snow:
And on the fated deer they pounce amain,
Each for himself, and all he can obtain;
As civilized and much enlightened man
Grabs for his precious self the most he can.
With jaws and teeth could dent a bar of steel
They rend the prey, nor care that it can feel;
And fight like furies for a toothsome part,
The tender kidneys or the trembling heart:
But when they vainly seek a juicy slice,
Inferior cuts command a higher price;
And twenty minutes from the victim's fall,
His bones excepted, they have eaten all.
Such were the concerts that the pioneer
On by-gone winter nights was wont to hear;
And call his boys, if boys he had, as I
Have been call'd up, to hear the hunt go by.

And once so very near they caught the prey,
We could have seen them, had it then been day:
The furious uproar of the bloody feast
Vouch'd for a score participants, at least:
When morning broke, we hied us to the place,
And view'd the ghastly remnants of the chase—
But prowling tenants of a sylvan land
Avaunt! I sing of the reclaiming hand!
Pursuant to the functions of the earth,
(Assign'd at once with its mysterious birth;
When by the author's fiat it was hurl'd
In space, a life and mind producing world;
And by affinity inherent found
The fostering centre it revolves around)
From arctic regions of perpetual snow,
And icebound seas the winds unsteady blow;
Through groaning forests and inclement skies,
Laden with frost, the fleet-wing'd tempest flies!
The frozen earth lies veil'd from present sight,
'Neath its hibernal robe of virgin white,
That like fair woman, from pollution's stain,
Was never purged to purity again.
Seal'd are the woodland marshes and lagoons,
Where croak'd the joy of Frenchmen and raccoons.
And over all without a thought of fear
Stalks the red hunter or the pioneer.
From early winter dates the annual round
Of manual labors that reclaim the ground;
And every season in its turn demands
A special labor of laborious hands:

In winter felling and dissecting trees
(However wind may blow or frost may freeze),
Employ his axe, and when the winter day
Fades into moonlight, still he swings away!
And only quits his heavy axe to ply,
With Nature's limit of endurance nigh,
And when the eastern skies begin to glow,
From day's exhaustless fountain just below,
He cuts the fuel for the dawning day
And back to labor wends his early way;
And ere a stroke, he doffs his coat and mitts,
Of which divesture every day permits,
And just as commonly includes his vest,
As Nature urges not a firm protest.
Naught on his outer vestment he relies
For warmth, but all on rugged exercise;
Suspended now and then, if mild the day,
Till from his brow he wipes the sweat away,
And parts a single glance between the sun
And work accomplish'd since his course begun;
While vital heat exerted strength sustains
Glows on his cheek and circles through his veins.
A little opening to the wintery sky,
That logs and brush promiscuous underlie,
Grows larger every day, and every night
He views the opening avenue of light;
Until the labor of a single day
Is lost in magnitude of his survey.
This much achieved by one who never fell'd
A tree before, nor such a feat beheld,

Is ample data to assume the day
Dear to the Christian world not far away,
And Nature's mighty bell about to toll
The annual midnight of the ice-girt pole!
The day to every Christian nation dear,
Day of rejoicing and of festal cheer,
In ancient story and in festal lay
Call'd "Merry Christmas"—the natal day
Of Him whose blood reclaimed a fallen race
From condemnation just, to former grace—
Such day auspicious once again returns,
Again the yule-log in the chimney burns.
First on renown'd Britannia's eastern isles,
On which the sun bestows his earlier smiles:
Where, as tradition tells, the toiling poor
Forget that Fortune spurns them from her door;
Forget her pamper'd favorite's bitter scorn,
And feel a while that men are equal born;
Save in the germ of intellectual worth
Bestow'd by Heaven on no degree of birth.
And by the same tradition, every state
(Down to the beggar at the castle gate,
Who from a portion of its Christmas fare,
In lieu of joy, derives a lighter care)
Festivity pervades; and rank and power
Put off their semblance in the social hour;
And all fraternally unite to do
Their share of homage to the season due:
The truth of this I question—but my song
Is not of England, nor its social throng.

Time brings the fall of dynasties, and years
And months and days are measured by the spheres,
And reck not man: they find and leave him where
The Fates decide—on Mammon's easy chair,
Or toil's uneasy treadmill, as they please
To curse with hardship or to bless with ease:
And under their discountenance austere
Returning Christmas finds the pioneer;
Whose present wants embrace the means to pay
Accustom'd tribute to the welcome day;
But Nature's mild demands are not denied;
And he and his are thankful—satisfied
To feast on hopes they could not entertain
In menial servitude beyond the main.
In retrospective chat the day is pass'd—
Of friends at home with whom they spent the last;
By which of these attended to the quay,*
To wave adieu, and see them sail away;
What letters have arrived—what letters sent;
From whom they came, and unto whom they went;
The nature of intelligence convey'd,
Or debts of friendship that are yet unpaid;
Or sacred memories that beget the sigh,
The faltering accent, or the humid eye
Of strong emotions: thus they whiled away
Their first December's five and twentieth day.

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*This word (quay) according to the lexicon is pronounced "Ke," but it seems so ridiculous to me that I shall pronounce it literally.

The day of rest and retrospection sped,
His willing feet the path to labor tread;
And ere the stars have faded from the sky,
The sylvan echoes to his stroke reply;
So short is now the day, the rising sun
Must find the labor of the day begun;
The operations of the season plann'd
The utmost diligence and time demand.
The last accomplish'd, earth has just begun
Another round of seasons with the sun;
Who now begins to light a longer day,
And less obliquely shed a warmer ray:
But many days elapse before the date
When winter's leading attributes abate
To give the son of toil sufficient length
Of day to suit his energy and strength.
But every day affords a little more
Of grateful sunlight than the day before;
Through every hour of which his chopping grows—
Its wider bounds the new-made stump enclose.
And when the dim frontier of solar light
Receding leaves it in the realm of night;
When light and labor in the darkness close
And weary Nature welcomes sweet repose,
The deer with caution issue from the wood
And from the new-made brush heaps crop the bud:
But at the early sign of coming day,
Or sight or sound of man, they bound away;
Leaving their footprints in the faithless snow,
That oft betray them to their human foe:

But bred not to the rifle and untaught
In all the wiles by which the game is sought,
The pioneer inclines not to pursue;
But want of food may prompt him so to do;
In which event the want of skill defies
His best endeavors to secure the prize:
But with a heavy crust upon the snow,
That half a yard in deepness lies below,
On which the canine hunter can pursue,
While every bound the fleeing game breaks through,
With little loss of time, the pioneer
Can fill his larder with the flesh of deer;
That under such conditions of the snow
Become the easy prey of every foe.
And now the planet on its annual way
Attains the point that gives the fool his day;
A point at which the sun's meridian glow
Falls with dissolving influence on the snow;
And tiny brooks, the issue of his beams,
In winding channels seek the larger streams.
The early harbingers of sunny spring,
That range aerial seas on trackless wing,
The bluebird, robin, and the sable crow,
Flit o'er the busy axeman, to and fro;
But not before his field attains the size
From which he hopes to reap a year's supplies.
Next, the "Canadian Nightingale" is heard;
A wingless, plumeless and amphibious bird,
That haunts the margin of lagoons and springs,

And through the nights serene of summer sings;
And in continued and voluptuous flow
Of melting melody excels the crow.
The giant of the north has been repell'd,
And to his mountain battlements expell'd;
Secure in which, on the besieging foe
He hurls his whelming avalanche of snow.
The task of winter to his hands assign'd,
While hope and fear alternate ruled his mind,
Is now contracted to a dozen trees,
That on the bounding lines the eye displease;
Or from their normal zenith so incline
They must in falling intersect the line;
With prudent foresight, these he dooms to fall,
And having doom'd, fulfils the fate of all.*
That change of labor serves in lieu of rest
Has been affirm'd; and is perhaps the best
Of wretched substitutes to toiling man,
By need impell'd to do the most he can.
Fatigue is more to application due,
Than to the kind of labor we pursue;
And he who labors to appease desire,
Be what his labor may, is prone to tire;
But with whatever ease or hardship fraught
Spring has its wonted change of labor brought.

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*In finishing a winter's chopping the last thing to be done, generally, is to straighten the lines and fell any trees that lean so much to the field that they must fall into it.

But ease belongs not to a forest life,
Nor to the husband less than to the wife:
Within the lexicon of pioneers
No term, but sleep, implying rest appears.
Succeeding labors for a time require,
In lieu of steel, the agency of fire;
But still the axe is daily in demand,
And waits contiguous to the dexter hand.
Now, burning of the brush he meditates,
And with impatience its condition waits;
A few fine days are needful to prepare
The brush yet green, as when aloft in air;
But many piles in autumn were begun
By fallen branches, bleached by wind and sun;
These soon become susceptible to fire,
That in its fury burns the pile entire:
But such resource is often found denied,
For which resources in reserve provide.
Matter combustible, in every guise
In which presented to his searching eyes,
To windward on the brush-pile he locates
Just where the wind directly operates
To drive the fire inward: this he fires,
And feeds with fuel as the case requires,
Till the fierce element involves the whole,
And clouds of smoke athwart the heavens roll.
As many fired as he can rightly tend,
He quits the torch the lagging fires to mend;
And whichsoever most demands his care,
He, with a forked pole in hand, is there.

With this device he agitates the fire,
When heat forbids him to approach it nigher;
And thrusts into the flames the brushy brands,
That could not be achieved by naked hands.
This labor done, a few pale ashes lie
Where late unsightly brush-heaps met the eye;
This quick displacement so improves the scene
That hope glows brighter than it yet has been.
The task of piling the dismember'd trees
In heaps, as knowledge of the art decrees,
Defies the strength of his laborious hands,
And aid of oxen and of men demands.
But whence derived is this auxiliary force?
His scatter'd neighbors are his willing source:
They know his need, anticipate his call,
And the response of one is that of all;
And some too distant to deserve the name
Respond with those of less disputed claim:
They too have needed, and will need the aid
They now extend, and all will be repaid.
For every rood of ground to be gone o'er
He needs a man to roll—for every four,
A yoke of oxen and a man to drive;
Which gives to every team a squad of five;
To every one of these, a quart of—well!
Just what it is, there is no need to tell:
But let what spirit may, the men inspire,
It is not there that they were wont to tire:
Squad against squad in merry mood they vie
To cross the field, and taste the juice of—why!

I meant—I mean to boast their prowess o'er
The beaten squads—and then to vie once more.
The field is staked in strips, and every crew
Assigned a strip or "stretch" to carry through;
And when by spirit-of-the-age inspired,
To be the leading squad is much desired;
And not impetuous youth contends alone,
But middle-life and hearty-age are prone.
Thus from the most herculean toil they draw
The zest of life; by Nature's happy law
To no estate belong the smile or tear;
In all conditions they are found, and here.
The logging labor done, the heaps require
A few fine days to fit them for the fire.
The trees prostrated in the distant past,
By stroke electric or terrific blast;
In every stage of dissolution found,
And some half buried in their parent ground,
Urged by the forces wonted to sustain
Back to their elemental state again—
These on the summit of the heaps are spread,
Where solar beams with most effect are shed,
And drying breezes wanton; soon as dried
Until combustible, the brand's applied.
The fires are kindled as the solar ray
Seeks by refraction to prolong the day;*
Through the assumption that the flames more
bright

*We used to fire the log heaps about sunset.

Exert increased destructiveness by night.
The day is past—the fallow glows with fires;
And sullen darkness to the wood retires;
Of which the margin too is conquered ground,
Wrested from night for fifty yards around.
A hundred tongues of flame ascend on high,
And sparks in millions gleam aloft and die:
From every fire a stream of smoke ascends,
And in a sable stratum slowly blends,
That thickening hovers, or athwart the sky
Drifts with the breeze afar beyond the eye.
The towering forest thickening into leaf
Engirds the field of fire in dark relief;
Aloft impervious to the shafts of light,
It frowns defiance in the cause of night:
But near the earth where leafy limbs are few
The searching beams perceive a passage through;
And little birds awake, as if to pay
Their grateful homage to a new-born day;
And chirp and flutter doubtful of the light,
But yet unable to resist it quite.
On this auspicious night the pioneer
Delays the call of needful rest to hear;
The partner of his life alike foregoes
An equal portion of her night's repose;
And when their little ones to rest retire,
They view the swift disorganizer—fire—
Their helping agent, in whose strength they trust
To turn the trees to fertilizing dust:
Without whose aid the action of decay

Alone could waste the fallen trees away;
And by such slow degrees, the youthful hand
That fell'd the trees in age might reap the land:
But Nature kind to the laborious arm
Gives this assistant to reclaim the farm.
Along the glowing margin side by side,
As when their light was all by love supplied,
They slowly saunter, or on rising ground
Thrill with enchantment of the scene around:
For think not thou, O born to pomp and pride!
That Nature's gifts are to the poor denied;
That he who wields the scythe or turns the sod
Is scarcely more impassion'd than the clod;
That all exalting attributes of mind
Are to the votaries of pomp confined:
Knowest thou the thousands that abroad the earth
Derive from peasant loins illustrious birth?
Knowest thou what hosts in gilded pomp are borne,
Whom gold alone redeems from public scorn?
Including not the noble fool or knave
That gold almighty has no power to save.
The lofty grandeur of the scene repaid
More than the sacrifice of slumber made;
And gave to feel that canvas never bore
A scene so thrilling as they stood before;
Which to present in numbers would employ
A brighter genius than the bard of Troy.
The sense of sound, of wider range than sight,
Presents the distant wonders of the night;

The wolf's low, dismal howl salutes the ear,
He seems afar, nor they suspect him near;
But his deceitful voice does not betray
His true locality to such as they;
But has a soothing sound of far away;
The hunter only or the pioneer
Of equal skill locates him by the ear.
But ere his lingering note has died away,
The wood resounds the watch-dog's angry bay;
From distant thresholds that he guards by night
He dares his outlaw kinsman to the fight:
They spur each other to the fiercest mood,
And warn aloof the prowler of the wood.
Afar and near the hooting owl is heard;
A most inquisitive, audacious bird;
That womanlike takes any risk to know
What man or dog is doing down below.
He preys on smaller birds, and takes delight,
And takes his victims also, in the night;
On noiseless wing he darts among the trees,
Himself unseen, while he acutely sees,
And culls the best and fattest at his ease.
These are the only creatures that afar
Apprise the listening settler what they are:
The screaming panther does not here belong,
And has no further claim upon my song.
But other sounds unite to give the hour
A strange impressiveness, a mystic power:
The cow-bells tolling in the forest round
Derive from distance more impressive sound;

Their measured tones through sullen darkness
borne
Impress the hearer with a sense forlorn:
At eve of many a long, laborious day,
With weary limbs relax'd, I careless lay,
And felt the distant bell's recurrent toll
Fall with a mystic influence on the soul,
A pensive loneliness, a nameless grief,
That knows no cause and sighs for no relief.
The night is past—the hour of toil return'd;
And low the heaps of heavy logs are burn'd;
Their smoking brands lie sunder'd on the ground;
And slow combustion loads the air around,
And smoke forbidden by the fog to rise
Acutely irritates the lungs and eyes;
The sense olfactory all around perceives
The fire smoldering in the moss and leaves.
The smoking brands suggest another scene,
Which though unfrequent has too often been
The ground on which the border hamlet stood,
Before its fated night of fire and blood;
When unsuspected savages assail'd,
And by their treachery and stealth prevail'd;
And all who fell not in the vain defence
Were plunder-laden hurried captive hence:
And early day reveal'd within its bounds
But scatter'd brands and charr'd foundation
rounds.
But to the Power that will'd our thanks are due
That such a scene Canadians never knew,

Saved by the voice of rumor from afar,
Where secret causes brew'd the midnight wa)
Of all the labors that reclaim the land,
The most laborious now awaits his hand:
To roll the heavy brands and bear the light,
Or all of less than a defiant weight,
To other heaps as may the best appear;
And so continue till they disappear.
The sun aloft and fires around his feet
O'er all the field dispense oppressive heat;
It glimmers round him and above his head,
As though he trod a lake of molten lead:
As o'er a heap of sooty brands he toils,
From every pore the perspiration boils;
His naked arms the briny moisture stains,
And heated blood distends his throbbing veins;
Nor yet he lags, nor meditates respite,
Save at his noon repast, before the night.
The brands consumed, he rakes the stumpy ground
And burns in little heaps the dry compound
Of chips and debris without other name,
That from the falling trees in winter came:
This labor done, and all the ashes spread,
The land awaits the germ of future bread.
The field has long been portion'd in his mind—
This part for wheat and that for corn design'd;
And for potatoes a sufficient plot
To keep the rust and mildew off the pot
For fifty weeks, or till another field

Carved from the forest gives another yield;
And over and above their daily need,
As many more as they require for seed.
The kitchen garden, made some time before,
Is green with promise of abundant store
Of garden fruit. And now the ready land
Receives the seed from the dispensing hand.
The final task is to inclose the field,
And from the herds at large protect the yield;
A labor meet for that athletic arm
That purged the stables of the bovine farm;
And other feats performed for which the name
Of Hercules is deified in fame.
From certain kinds of trees the rails are made,
And every kind affords its choicest grade;
Oak, elm and basswood and the ash produce
Ninety per cent. of all the rails in use.
With heavy maul and wedges he assails
The stubborn logs and rends them into rails;
Two hundred in a day, or more or less,
As rail-cuts vary in their willingness
To be asunder riven: but hands untried
With some abatement of results are plied.
But when the germ puts forth its tender blade
That for protection calls, the rails are made,
And form a sinuous barricade around
His twenty roods, or more or less of ground.
The goal of energy has been attain'd,
And every sinew to its purpose strain'd:
But he forgets the heavy fighting done,

To know the battle o'er, and victory won;
A fruitful field from wooded wilds secured
By strength of sinew and fatigue endured:
A courage purged of the beginner's fear
Will rule the labors of the second year.
But half the present year has yet to run
(The round of labors with the axe begun)
Of which the future half is less severe
In point of hardship to the pioneer;
With less monotony the days resolve,
As toils more varied on his hands devolve;
And conscious triumph over recent toils,
The groaning truck of manual labors oils.
A week or so he dedicates to chores
About the house, within and out of doors;
What comfort or convenience may require,
Supported also by his wife's desire,
Is done if possible—he builds a stoop,
Or for their houseless hens a needful coop.
These having done his corn awaits the hoe,
Or weeds too rankly in his tubers grow,
Or both demand his presence in the row:
These may engross his agricultural care
Till new-mown hay perfumes the ambient air;
About the day that gave the Boyne renown,
When James and William fought for England's
crown;
Or more correctly, when their followers bled
To place the bauble on their champion's head—
But autocrats, avaunt! with such as you

We have not less than we desire to do!
But when the crop he planted has been hoed,
And weeds and thistles pluck'd from that he sow'd,
His work is done, until the drooping ear
And yellow stem proclaim it fit to shear;
And in those early days both wheat and corn,
And oats as well, were by the sickle shorn;
But more efficient tools did need devise,
As fields increased in number and in size.
But shall the pioneer, till fields are ripe,
Rest from his labors and indulge his pipe?
Not he: on older farms not far away
Some help is needed to secure the hay;
Thither with scythe upon his back he goes,
And through the busy season daily mows;
Or takes what other duty of the field
That circumstances for the time may yield;
Returning home as often as he can,
As should a husband and a husbandman:
And ever and anon, to grace their board,
Brings something every day cannot afford.
The haying season past, the early grain
Invites the blade and gives him work again;
And later fields continue so to do,
Until his own is ripe and ready too.
The money earn'd, should present wants allow,
Would buy a good, and much-desired cow;
And to that end they foster every care,
The hard-won issue of his toil to spare.

They need a yoke of oxen; but matured,
And to the labor of the yoke inured,
Is not within their means; a pair of steers,
Whose age has recently attain'd to years,
Is all they dare to hope; and even these
Cannot be purchased till he further sees.
And now he reaps the issue of his toil,
A grateful offering of the virgin soil,
And though by stinted acreage but small,
'Tis sweet to know that they retain it all;
No grasping landlord takes the better part,
And scorns the hand that gives it in his heart:
And this it was that woo'd him from a shore
Where land is held not by the laboring poor;
Where lords and dukes and earls possess the whole,
And hold the tiller in a mean control;
Granting a yearly pittance to sustain
Sufficient life to till the fields again.
And while he gathers in the season's fruit
He feels exalted in his new pursuit;
And is he not exalted? (even he
Whose toiling serf he lately ceas'd to be
Knows it; and feels the seed of danger sown—
A growing power that may menace his own:
And rightly doubts the waste of waters wide
An all-sufficient barrier to provide
Around the interests of the landed few,
Should ever need of battlement ensue),
His lordship's dog transform'd his serf to be

Is less exalted in the change than he;
And he who feels not such a change of state,
Is not the man to win it; or dictate
To whatsoever power from day to-day
To which events subject him—but obey.
As one aloft, it matters not how high,
Perceives it not by gazing at the sky;
But casting on the earth where late he stood
A single glance betrays his altitude:
So when on heights to be by labor won
His eye is fix'd, he sees not what is done;
But feels exalted when remembrance shows
The servile depth from which he lately rose.
Nor has he far to rise to be a man,
Designed by Nature in her gracious plan;
For she intended not that man should hoard,
And be by virtue of his wealth a lord:
For social rank, instead of wealth and birth,
She gave degrees of intellectual worth;
'Gainst which no man rebels; for those denied
More than a commonplace are satisfied:
The harvest yields a little stack of wheat,
Built not by hands unpractised in the feat,
And thatch'd with skill and patience to remain
Unharm'd through torrents of autumnal rain;
A crib of corn containing in the ear,
If not a hundred bushels, very near;
And table roots in such abundant store,
'Twould be ingratitude to wish for more.

When minor omens and the blood-red sun
Proclaim that Indian summer has begun,
(Perhaps more fitly call'd the pioneer's;
Be whose it may, with him it disappears!)
The task of threshing out his stack of wheat
Allows him scarcely time his meals to eat;
Although the signs rebuke his fear of rain,
It still incites, and they rebuke in vain.
Upon a floor arranged on level ground,
With quilts or sheets or blankets hung around
To check the kernels flying from the flail,
The wheat is thresh'd and winnow'd in the gale;
And having made from hollow basswood trees
Capacious tubs, he puts it into these.
And now the labors of the year are done;
And of the next, to be at once begun:
His purposed toils permit of no respite,
More than the sleep of an autumnal night.
The cautious elephant strides fearless o'er
The bridge he safely cross'd not long before;
So enters he upon his second round
Of toils, assured by having trod the ground:
For having sown and reap'd the land he clear'd,
Leaves nothing new before him to be fear'd.
Surveys he next the forest to locate
The year's enlargement of inclosed estate;
Which having done, its length and breadth defines,
Blazing the trees along its bounding lines.
The building of a barn, in which to store
His next ensuing yield, he ponders o'er—

To build, and then to longer do without,
He meditates alternately in doubt;
Resolved that fate alone may interfere
With the recurring labors of the year;
If undertaken, must be carried through
With operations plann'd, and not in lieu
Of any part; for everything must yield
To all endeavors to enlarge the field.
If true it be, as men so often say,
To have the will is to perceive the way,
Be sure he'll see his way to build the wall,
And place thereon a roof before the fall;
In which condition it will serve his end
Till opportunity is given to mend.
The far resounding axe and falling tree
(Sounds that in youth familiar were to me),
Again are wafted on the wintry blast,
To warn the forest that it cannot last—
That in the changeful lapse of one decade,
Its ancient grandeur will forever fade:
Nor even long the stump will point the ground
That nursed the giant oak, three fathoms round:
This mammoth and Methuselah of the wood,
That has the wrathful elements withstood
Through centuries implied, to enterprise
Must yield with all, of every kind and size;
And, like a pebble in the ocean cast,
Sink in eternal lethe of the past:
So common mortals live their little span,
And sink forever in oblivion;

And not alone the common, e'en the great
Are but respited from the common fate:
However loud the clarion voice of fame,
Or justly lauded the resounded name,
Duration slow absorbs the martial sound,
As streams on deserts by the thirsty ground,
And far athwart the waste of ages past,
The world's applause is hush'd to peace at last.
But to resume—the hero of my lay
Attains in health another Christmas day;
Nor to regale on hope, however bright,
A solid banquet woos his appetite—
The fattest turkey of a well-fed brood,
Rear'd for indulgence of a festive mood,
Suspended safely by a yard of wire
Is slowly turn'd before a maple fire:
A dish below receives the dripping juice,
Which at the table meets with ready use:
And in the family pot that wholesome rood,
The mealy tuber boils; and garden fruit
Is variously prepared for a repast
More worthy of the day than was the last.
Around the board the cheery look and jest,
And childish freak intensify their zest;
And not the sumptuous revels of a lord
Excite to envy at this plebeian board.
The meal enjoy'd, the hours are talk'd away
On themes congenial to the place and day;
Of which the last excites renew'd concern
For distant friends, as vanish'd scenes return;

And wishes are express'd that they may come
And make beside them an abiding home:
How this adjacent lot would suit a brother,
And that beyond the way locate another?
Thus do the pair interrogate each other.
And invitations too are contemplated
To those by marriage and by birth related;
A genial climate and a fruitful soil,
And nothing to be fear'd but honest toil,
To be the chief allurements, with a few
Of minor import, but important too:
Such are the themes of chat that entertain
Till Nature summons to repose again.
Succeeding weeks elapse with nothing new
Ambition to abate or zest renew:
The labor of the season is begun
With every day, and with the same is done;
But not from work is he reprieved outright
By the approach of an hibernal night:
With needful things as sugar troughs and spiles*
The early quadrant of the night he whiles.
His children round him, in the novel task
Absorbing interest manifest, and ask
How soon the vessels will be put to use?
And how the trees impart their luscious juice?
And many other like interrogations
About the sugar trees and operations;

*Spiles are wooden spouts that conduct the sap into the trough.

And all explain'd by their indulgent sire,
To sugar-making dreams they all retire.
About the close of winter's frigid reign,
When day and night an equal length attain,
Or even sooner under grateful skies,
The maple leaf begins in sap to rise:
And now the troughs and spiles are counted out,
And call for fifty trees, or thereabout;
And these of goodly size can all be found
Within the radius of a gunshot round.
And though but few, are more than he can tend
Without the aid a willing wife can lend;
He can no more than quit his other toil
To tap the trees and furnish wood to boil;
His pioneeress with becoming zest
Assumes the daily burden of the rest.
The trees selected and with troughs supplied,
Are ready for the tapper; on the side
Most favor'd by the sun, he makes the wound,
A yard, or less, or more above the ground,
As in the case is meet; and it must be
Of such a form and angle to the tree
That all the sap will to a corner flow
Into the spile inserted just below;
Adown the little spout the syrup tends,
And then in globules to the trough descends.
The winter's snow has melted in the wood,
And seaward gravitates its annual flood.
With autumn leaves the ground is overspread
By all the glowing dyes of autumn shed;

The leaden color that precedes decay
Becomes them better where they prostrate lay:
So gives the bloom of beauty's witching face
The blighted hue of age and sorrow, place:
On elevated ground the leaves are dry;
But on the low, compact and humid lie;
As when beneath the winter's weight of snow
They felt no sun to shine, or breezes blow.
The early songsters tunefully portend
The cold repose of Nature at an end:
The timid chipmunk, sitting near his hole,
In some tree root, or summit of a knoll,
(As nature gave him not the voice to sing)
Chirps out his gladness of returning spring;
But when approach'd by any of his foes,
Gives one defiant chirp and down he goes!
Thus every little thing endow'd with voice
Employs that gift of Nature to rejoice;
The very trees, as in the winter nude,
Appear expectant of a life renew'd.
Another sound in sugar time is heard,
Unlike the voice of either beast or bird;
Like distant thunder or a rumbling car,
And always seems to issue from afar:
Although the cause, the very rapid play
Of wings, is never very far away—
It is the partridge drumming; while the state
Of incubation occupies his mate.
A mossy log is chosen, and a spot
Thereon selected, and he varies not

A finger's length from where he first went through
His exercise, and found that it would do.
Between the first and second time he flaps
His wings, he lets sufficient time elapse
To let his efforts be distinctly heard;
But shorter lapse of time precedes the third;
And when he has attain'd the fifth or sixth,
No ear acute perceives a pause betwixt.
With such rapidity his pinions beat
The mossy log, they seem not to repeat;
But blend together in a single sound,
Whose point of issue seems the compass round.
For half a minute he prolongs his beat,
Then sits inert and silent on his seat
For three or four and then renews the feat.
Now let us to the sugar-bush repair
To see and note the sights of interest there—
When sunny days to frosty nights succeed,
The sugar maples most profusely bleed;
And grant I may at such auspicious time
Conduct you thither in my sylvan rhyme.
The sugar-camp is on a rising ground,
A central spot, with sugar maples round:
Here hangs a caldron, (bargain'd for of late,
On terms adapted to this early date—
To be in marketable sugar paid,
Out of the season's yield as soon as made;
Or such conditions seeming too severe,
May get on half indulgence of a year)
Depending from an horizontal pole;

And two strong forked posts sustain the whole.
A heavy log before and one behind
Confine the fire to the work assign'd:
And while the syrup in the caldron boils,
Among the trees, the pioneeress toils;
In every hand a pail, from tree to tree,
She gathers in her honey, like the bee.
The little that they can, her children too,
Are more than willing, they are proud, to do;
They gather fallen wood, and to and fro
Between the camp and house on errands go;
And gather sap in tin or jug or pail,
And from the trough they cannot lift, they bale.
And at the camp, the infant at the breast,
Tuck'd in a leaky sap trough, does its best
By sleeping quietly: and thus they all
Perform their little part, however small.
With brimming pails the mother oft returns,
Sees how the syrup boils and fire burns,
Looks to her infant sleeping in the trough,
And with her empty buckets hurries off.
At eve the pioneer relieves his spouse;
But further toil awaits her at the house;
The meal of evening is to be prepared,
And naught so little as her labor spared,
And all the many chores that to the state
Of motherhood belong, her hands await.
But under the cares of her forest abode,
She groans not as under a grievous load:
"Be it ever so humble," et cetra, she sings,

And the wildwood around to her melody rings.
And having supp'd, should sap in store remain,
The husband hurries to the camp again;
Refills the caldron and renews the fire,
And makes the liquid in the smoke expire;
Till in the compass of a single tenth
Of its first bulk reposes all its strength:
He leaves it then till morning to his wife,
And seeks oblivion of a toilsome life.
While agencies conspire to drain the trees,
Nor wife, nor husband, dares to think of ease;
Nor deem their heavy labors ill repaid
If fair success attends their efforts made.
In every week there is a certain day,
On which the young auxiliaries draw their pay,
When all the syrup they have boil'd of late,
Solidified into the sugar state:
The first occasion an expert is brought,
By whom the secrets of the art are taught;
And much wise counsel given without a price,
Save an implicit trust in the advice.
Above all others is the snowball test,*
When snow can be obtain'd, or ice, the best;
Or ice-cold water in the lieu of snow
Will do as well, if managed so and so.

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*A snowball is dipped in the hot sugar and withdrawn as quickly as possible; the thin layer is let cool, and then struck with a knife; if it flies like glass the sugar is done.

To regulate the fire with due concern,
For fear excessive heat the sugar burn;
And other cautionary observations
Are made to supplement illustrations.
The sugar done, the little pioneers
Present their claims of wages in arrears;
And their indulgent mother pays their bills,
And each presented egg-shell promptly fills.
As draws the season to a final close,
The sap less fit for solid sugar grows;
And into syrup of a second grade
The closing efforts of the trees are made:
The last of all, 'tis common to reduce
To maple vinegar for family use.
The failing syrup having ceased to run,
And all that labor can accomplish done,
For preservation through the coming year,
The trough on end against the tree they rear;
And gather in the spiles that yet remain
Integral, fit to serve their end again;
And fixtures worthy of the little care
Are laid where time and weather least impair.
The labors of the spring, to log and burn,
And to inclose, again with spring return;
And hardships undergone a year ago
He nerves himself again to undergo.
Again his neighbors at the logging meet;
And with unfeign'd regard each other greet:
Brethren in all but parentage, they feel
A brother's interest in a neighbor's weal;

And one distress'd beyond the common grief,
Needs not to ask, if they can give, relief.
Fraternal sympathies are nursed in man
By naught that rivals Fortune's common ban;
The mystic brotherhood may boast the charm
That keeps their bosoms to each other warm;
But undissembled friendship most abounds
Where most the wild reclaiming axe resounds.
It is not meet henceforward to survey
Recurrent scenes of toil from day to day;
What has been said in turn of seasons past
Embraces all between the first and last—
Until progression in its westward van
Removes the pioneer; but leaves the man
A freehold tiller of the cultured lands,
Rung from the wild by his laborious hands.
The days of spring develop nothing new,
More than an enlargement of the work to do:
His acres doubled, double seed demand
And equal service of the seedsman's hand;
And as he deems discreet, to plant or sow,
The double service of the drag or hoe.*
His sorest need at present time endured
Is that of oxen to the yoke inured;

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*The drag is a new land-harrow; its form is an isosceles triangle whose equal sides are about three feet in length and produced about two feet on the other side of the base; the base being about two and a half feet long.

For in the season of his need, the few
Possess'd of oxen need their service too:
A pair of steers must therefore soon be bought,
And in the labors of the fallow taught.
Meantime he must contrive, as best he may,
To meet the wants immediate on his way.
Perchance with rake and hoe disturb the soil,
And cover up the germ by dint of toil:
In such expedient, the domestic force,
All who have strength to further the resource,
Are muster'd in the field from day to day,
Till sheer industry wears the task away:
The weaker members of the force who tire,
On special furlough for a while retire;
And are again recall'd; thus are the young
And tender sinews to endurance strung:
By such emergency at first was I
Call'd from my sports the weary hoe to ply;
And so my limbs sustain'd the early strain,
They ne'er from labor were released again:
Nor hope they now the long delay'd release,
Until relax'd in everlasting peace—
So feels the tenant of the living tomb,
The humid dungeon of sepulchral gloom,
By hapless zeal in bold defence array'd
Against oppression, to his doom betray'd;
By friends forgot, and to the world unknown,
He pleads for freedom now with death alone.
The vegetative season of the year,
Between the budding germ and drooping ear,

Propitiously has sped: the yellow field
Invites the reaper to a bounteous yield;
And it behooves him early and amain
To ply his sickle in the ripest grain:
For every rood he harvested before,
He now has two to wield the sickle o'er;
And little leisure will his task afford
Until his toil's reward is reap'd and stor'd:
Yet feels he his laborious lot less hard
Than that of some who reap a just reward.
Does for the issue of the season wait
A barn completed to a useful state?
If so, a needful end has been attain'd;
But if the Fates have not his will ordained,
His primary resource for threshing grain
Must be in need resorted to again:
But something has been done, or less or more,
Toward a granary and threshing-floor;
And if the logs around the site are laid,
And clapboards for the roof already made,
Be sure a barn will hold the season's yield
While yet the summer songsters haunt the field.
Brief are the seasons to the bold intent
To scale by labor Fortune's steep ascent;
His full intent the passing hour denies,
And ere enough has been accomplish'd, flies;
So with the annual labors—what he could
Leaves something unachieved of what he would.
'Tis but by aiming to do more, that man
Attains the utmost scope of what he can;

Whether the labor of the field it be,
Or the accursed trade of poetry.
Another course of manual toils is done,
And meet results by manful efforts won;
Augmented stores allay his wonted care
Of future want, and promise means to spare.
Between the hemispheres of night and day
The polar circles now bisected lay;
Encroaching night from yielding day attains
An equal length: and now a vantage gains;
Sol, from the virgin, enters on the sign
Symbol of justice, and of wrath divine;
From which in lieu of summer's fostering ray
He sheds an influence that promotes decay;
And to the solar dispensation true,
Reluctant Nature dons her autumn hue.
So oft has "gentle spring" been poet's theme,
Its evening zephyrs and its morning beam;
So oft have mingled in Thomsonian lay,
That all unsaid is worthy not to say:
And autumn too has had its ample share
Of poetaster's and of poet's ware.
But Indian summer of these early years,
As in remembrance still to me appears,
Is no less noble theme, and not so trite;
For pioneers had not the bent to write
(Save him, who, doubtful of success, essays
To sing their toils in numbers worthy praise);
In numbers, therefore, I essay to draw
An Indian summer as my boyhood saw.

This glorious season was a month, or less,
But now and then extended in excess,
Of which the passing day was like the last,
And hence like each and all the others past;
And in appearance seem'd to be the same
Recurring day with which the season came.
The cloudless sun is of a sanguine hue,
Which to a misty atmosphere is due;
Such hazy atmosphere as might attest
That forest fires are raging in the west;
Until the sense olfactory could decide
That other source the hovering mist supplied.
The temperature is such as to dispense
With every form of corporal defence
Against its variations; one might make
A bed and bedroom of his field, nor take
A so-much-dreaded cold; unless he chose
The very dampest place for his repose.
The air is still; the falling leaves incline
To *terra firma* in the shortest line;
But seem to loiter on their earthward way,
As though they knew it ended in decay.
How like is man, whose wayward feet have trod
The major part of life's uneven road?
Fain would he loiter as the end draws nigh,—
The night he fear'd not while the sun was high!
But to resume: not only to enhance
I name the season, Nature's dying trance;
For dreamy langour and inertia spread
Their drowsy pinions o'er her dying bed,

As though celestial opiate sooth'd away
Her proud, but vain, reluctance to decay.
"Earth felt the wound"—the deed that did abase
And curse with toil and death the human race;
And Nature's death autumnal is the fruit
That springs recurrent from that noxious root:
Eden, dispeopled of the fallen pair,
First felt the fatal blight, that spread from there,
And in the yellow leaf (the first array
That fallen Nature wore, as well as they)*
Became the season that my lines portray.
In boyhood's autumns I was pleased to tread
The sylvan path by sallow leaves bespread;
The mottled foliage rustling from the trees,
And wailing cadence of the fitful breeze
Accorded with my mood: or day or night
In Nature's annual woe I felt delight.
So wildly witching in the moon's pale beam
Did fading Nature to my fancy seem,
That many an hour of rest did I forego
For present ecstacy—and future woe!
O! had I weigh'd with equal zest and will
How many sallow leaves were worth a mill
In fattening compost for exhausted soil,
I had not eaten now the bread of toil.
I treat the winter as a deer would treat

*We are not told that the fig leaves were yellow, but we know they very soon would be after being put to such use.

A ten-rail fence opposed to his retreat
From an approaching foe; and in the spring
Begin with early birds again to sing.
Again the sugar season's noontide beams
Augment with melted snow the forest streams;
And in the sugar-bush again appear
The scenes repeated of the former year:
Another caldron has been bought or leased,*
And other means accordingly increased
And greater labors also will attend
The consummation of a greater end.
Each season adds a caldron to his fires,
Till a full equipage no more requires.
The labors of the sugar-bush and field
No further interest to my song can yield;
For several years the annual routine
Will be the same it hitherto has been:
These years I overpass; and then review
My theme at large in quest of matter new
As fears of failure and distress abate,
And all success on labor seems to wait,
New prospects open; in gradation rise
The varied heights attain'd by enterprise:
Of these, the summits of scholastic fame
Engross his vision, and his soul inflame.
These he surveys, as Moses, when he died,

*Caldrons were sometimes taken for the season at one pound of sugar for each pail of sap the caldron held.

Survey'd the promised land, to him denied;
But in his people felt himself possess'd
Of that which forty years had been his quest:
Such were the thoughts the hardy woodman knew,
When first these heights engross'd his mental view.
Knowing himself unfit for such ascent,
His mind too long to rustic labor bent,
He nobly vow'd, with true Mosaic mind,
To scale the heights in those he left behind.
This to accomplish—or exhaust in vain
The spare resources of his hands and brain.
Engross'd not by necessity—he vows;
And with his all the lofty scheme endows.
How may the task herculean be begun?
What are the means by which it may be done?
These are the questions that his mind revolved;
Which having duly done, he thus resolved:
To build, located where the highways meet,
The elements of art, a sylvan seat;
Where infant Genius can at first essay
The mild approaches of his alpine way;
And thence ascending by gradations higher,
Up to the summit of attain'd desire;
Whether M.A., M.D., the Pulpit, or the Gown,
Or, from Apollo's hand, a laurel crown.
Ere long a rustic seminary stood,
Approach'd by footpaths winding through the wood:
And by the public roads, that yet remain
As the locating compass and the chain

Left them; except the changes that decay
Wrought in the timber fell'd along the way;
And that a scanty pass-way for a team
Winds through the stumps and debris like a stream.
But change is now en route: an annual tax
Of labor on the roads with spade and axe,
And with laborious oxen, is imposed;
To be by local engineers disposed:
To bridge the little streams, and corduroy
The swampy ground, will be the first employ.
Returning to the schoolhouse, we return
Not only to a place where children learn
The rudiments of art; a public place
Of supplication to the Throne of Grace
We near as well—the church of early days,
The best its members then had means to raise,
Known by a name the truest and the best,
Though now degraded to a modern jest,
The "Meeting House"; where Christians wont to meet
As fellows equal, and as brethren greet:
Rude was the edifice; and no less rude
The stage or platform and the benches nude;
Unpainted forms that Fashion's votaries scorn;
But meet for worship of the Manger-Born.
From scenes of comfort came the pioneer
Of Christian faith, and preach'd on the frontier;
From place to place through lonely wilds he rode,
And where it found him, for the night abode;

Nor humble lodging, nor its homely fare,
Could quell his courage or his zeal impair.
Such modern Paul the rugged wild explored,
And taught the faith of fallen man restored
By Christ's atoning blood; and all who came
In such atonement register'd a claim;
The toils and woes of their terrestrial fate
Gave greater moment to a future state;
And no less willing to be taught were they
Than he to teach, and lead the heavenward way.
And when unwonted depth of pathless snow
Forbade the feeble and the fair to go,
They yoked their oxen to a home-made sleigh
And rode to church, and broke the cumber'd way;
Nor did such equipage at church excite
Unmeet commotion: 'twas a common sight.
And now the pioneer has ceased to be
The pioneer that erst by toil was he:
No forest land has he more than he would
Preserve for building purposes and wood;
All he would have subjected to the plow
Is disencumber'd of the forest now;
And that which gave him such adventurous name
Now to a new frontier transfers the same.
To early manhood now his sons are grown,
With brawny sinew that excels his own,
(For age and hardship, hardship more than time,
Have hurried past the zenith of his prime);
The scythe and cradle they adroitly wield,
And guide the plow athwart the furrow'd field;

And every labor of the farm can they
Unwearied ply throughout the length of day.
Blest in his sons, as few are borne to be
Blest in the life that they impart, is he:
Remote from cities where the young are taught
In all the vices that are manly thought
By vulgar minds—the horse-race and the fight
Of pugilists, the city rough's delight;
And where the little boy can glibly tell
The street and number where the harlots dwell,
And deems the country youth profoundly green
Who to such place of shame has never been;
(I had attain'd the mid-day of my youth
Ere I believed in such a place forsooth;
And had belief abruptly on me burst,
I almost think I would have wept at first)*
Remote from all allurements, which obey'd
The youthful mind from native worth degrade:
And oft domestic discontent provoke,
And make it's mild restraint appear a yoke:
Unread in books of romance, which imperil
The native purity of boy or girl,
Their early years in labor and in play,
Beseeming age and strength, were pass'd away,

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*I was about nineteen before I believed such places existed, except in fancy as a representation of the extreme depth of depravity to which the race could sink, and I felt ashamed to know the truth.—G.S.

Till now attain'd to manhood's early years,
Their parents' joy, their country's volunteers.
Hail, first-born of the land, such type of men
Your native country ne'er will bear again!
Parent, and period and place combined
Once only can beget such type of mind;
Of human lineage they are scarcely more
Than of the scenes they wonted to explore:
Their parents' sons, and Nature's, they avow
Allegiance equal, and to each they bow
With equal reverence; equally obey
The code of Nature and paternal sway.
From them the phrase "old man" was never heard
In lieu of father; nor in slang absurd
Do they indulge; nor yet bestow a thought
Upon refinement as by Fashion taught:
Their's is refinement, like themselves, unknown
In Fashion's gaudy ranks, and all their own—
A flower congenial to the virgin earth
From which it sprung, and of spontaneous birth:
Though not immense, as through a spacious room
A grain of musk diffuses its perfume,
And long replenishes, this modest sense,
That at the truly gross conceives offence,
Sheds its aroma through the youthful breast
And to each kindred feeling gives a zest.
Such were his sons, for whom he knew no care
Beyond what Nature deems a father's share.
Which of all human ill should first appear

Upon the catalogue, the most severe
Demanding foremost place? We only know
Which we would chiefly shun, or wish a foe:
Had I the power that human ills dispose,
And eke the will to visit on my foes,
I'd give to him whose heart I least would spare
A son ungrateful to his father's care.
Nor in his issue of the gentler sex
Was he less fortunate; the nymph who recks
Not of parental counsel, nor the shame
Of tarnish'd virtue, was not of his name.
Nor were his daughters angels minus wings;
For there are, doubtless, several other things
That in angelic nature hold a place,
That had no part in theirs; but every grace
That blooms in company of honor, truth,
And maiden purity, was theirs in sooth.
And they were paragons of womankind;
Bred to the code of Nature, and refined
To her own etiquette, as in the state
Before the first of woman rashly ate
The fatal fruit forbidden: nor less free
From guileful arts and sham, were they than she.
And they had beauty—beauty that required
But to be seen, to be at once admired,
If not beloved; for Love is not confined
To any type of beauty: Love is blind;
But ever and anon, he gets the loan
Of admiration's eye and calls his own.
The knee of Pride and Power has often bow'd

To charms less winning than to them avow'd:
In beauty they eclipsed the rose in bloom,
Bath'd in the dew of morning; its perfume
Intensifying the mysterious power
That thrills the rapt beholder of the flower:
A more entrancing influence sheds the rose
That on the soft, warm cheek of Beauty glows;
To which emotion lends its fleeting dyes
And meet expression gives to lustrous eyes.
And they had eyes as bright as ever yet
Kept vigil under brows of brown or jet;
And brow as smooth and delicately fair
As yet o'ercast by anger or despair;
And lips as tempting as were ever press'd,
And in return—the reader knows the rest;
'Tis not in language, but by lips express'd.

TO THE READER

Reader (if any should my lay peruse)
Permit me on thy patience to impose
A further strain; thou wilt not me refuse,
Who has perused my numbers to the close.
Rend off the veil of prejudice, which throws
A blind depreciation o'er the page
Of yet unbranded verse; in vain it glows
With brightest gems of thought: in every age
Thus has it been, and is in learning's fiercest rage.

Why is it thus? Is poetry like beers?
Is it, as well as they, improved by time?
Does the probation of a term of years
Enhance its sense, its rhythm, or its rhyme?
If so, my numbers will be three-x-prime
When fully aged, I indulge no fears;
But present age appraisement does not chime
With truth, indulging envy's flouts and jeers:
And he who knows it best, is he who least reveres.

Rend off the veil, and with unbiass'd mind
Peruse my numbers, and anon compare
With works to which the world was erst as blind,
And now avows more merit than they bear:
I ask not thine, or any arm to spare
Whenever justice vindicates the blow;
And then it is not mercy to forbear,
More than to strike in wantonness or show
Of seeming virtuous zeal to lay pretenders low.

I have not more to ask than that express'd
In the preceding stanza; but I have
Some retrospections that I would invest
With numbers meet and capable to save
That which they serve as vesture from the grave
Of perish'd thought, when I have gone to mine,
Touching the mode in which the wise behave
To the young votary of the tuneful nine;
And to the youth unborn, a warning I design.

Ere I a path had chosen to pursue,
I read in magazines and journals oft
Advice from publishers and pastors too,
Bidding the youth "aim high" and "look aloft";
Had I been wise, at these I would have scoff'd
As fashionable babble, meaning naught;
But I was but a stripling, green and soft,
And took them in good faith; and then I sought
To learn what might be "high," what might
"aloft" be thought.

And in the self-same magazines I read—
What all who read have often read since then—
Long panegyrics on the poets dead;
Styling them gifted, Heaven-inspired men
The sabre is less mighty than the pen
I also found on every second page;
Until the poet in my mental ken
Became the star and idol of his age,
Standing above the rest on honor's highest stage.

I doubted nothing, and at once resolved
To scale the steepy pinnacle of fame:
I was not blind to what the task involved;
For I was not in quest of venture tame;
I sought achievement worthy of the flame
That Nature made the beacon of my life—
Knight-errant ardor, that imputed shame
To mediocre merit, and at strife
With littleness in general, save sorrow, sin and wife.

My path resolved, I wrote, review'd, destroy'd,
And wrote again, again to feed the fire;
And when my leisure was not thus employ'd
It served by other means my chief desire:
The knowledge my pursuit did most require
I chiefly sought; and many a boy did quiz
To learn the height to which he would aspire;
And hence how far my mind resembled his;
And found them all unlike as mind to matter is.

This gave me ample data to assume
That I must be above them, or below;
And in the latter place there scarce was room
A gosling's mental attributes to stow;
Which gave my vanity a fairer show
Of justice in presuming to the first;
For I was left no other place to go,
And must accept it, be it best or worst—
But in the lower state had been more mildly curs'd.

Time roll'd away in labor of the mind,
And that of body slavishly severe,
Constant and ever the laborious kind
That gives the epithet of pioneer,
Till I emerged on manhood's proud frontier,
When I review'd my mental labors past;
And much that did more worthy erst appear
To the destroying element was cast;
And that which did survive a mental furnace pass'd.

The efforts that were spared from this review
Were, after some improvement, laid away
To be, as time permitted, added to,
As though they had been promises to pay
Waiting maturity, but lackaday!
I learn'd how little they were such ere long;
And with more truth than eloquence I say
They were not worth the mythical "old song,"
In promises to pay of solvent bank and strong.

And when I deem'd the time had come to claim
The first instalment of the promised prize,—
The lisping accents of an infant fame,
That would to fuller notes in future rise;
And with a clarion voice the world apprise
That to be graven on the poet's roll
Another votary of the Muse applies,
And is admitted to the ancient scroll;
Adjunctive lustre shedding on the illustrious whole.

I wrote to my advisers, to the class
By whom the kindly counsel had been lent,
Secure of sympathy at least—alas!
Their interest in the nation's youth was spent;
Their minds had taken a prosaic bent;
Although their publications as before
To their abandon'd tenets still gave vent;
As if the Fates forbade them to give o'er,
Or they in Styx baptized to falsehood evermore.

They told me now, or such as deign'd reply,
The shelves were full—that there was no demand—
No money in poetic labors—I
At other task had better try my hand:
But when the ship lies founder'd on the sand
It is too late to warn her from the shoal;
And he who signall'd safety from the strand,
And led her on to the disastrous goal,
Should wear the fangs of guilt deep in his perjured soul.

The truth arrived too late: a mind so long
To one dear purpose wedded, and inured
To meditations which thereto belong,
Can from its bent be nevermore allured:
And all the ills incurred must be endured;
As maladies to which the flesh is heir
May long be suffer'd, but cannot be cured:
And o'er its ruined castle in the air
The soul will ponder still, and nurse its own despair.

All I have written since that fatal time
Has been as brandy portion'd to its slave,
Constrain'd in durance for no other crime
Than his enslavement, with intent to save:
And when his appetite does fiercely crave,
He is allow'd a draught to hold at bay
The wild delirium whose victims rave
Of snakes and dragons round their shrinking prey,
And like a frightened child for succor shriek and pray.

Were public sentiment as hemp or jute,
A substance tangible to weave or braid,
As would the purpose contemplated suit,
I'd have a rug immediately made
Thereof, and on my outer threshold laid,
On which to wipe my feet from day to day;
And feel the debt of scorn with interest paid,
Which I commission this my song to pay,
While symbols have the power its import to convey.

If Homer could return in such disguise
As present age conditions would require
To blunt the vision of the sharpest eyes
To all, except his old poetic fire:
And if again he strung his ancient lyre
To earn thereby the bread he could not want,
He would be seized and stripp'd of his attire,
And put in piebald trousers by Van Zant;
And sent to dig carnivora dens—or do vat else
he vant.

The last stanza was added in 1907, thirty years later than the others. To the reader yet unborn, and those remote from the scene, I state that Van Zant in 1907 was governor of Toronto jail; and his prisoners were employed to dig animal dens in the hills of Riverdale Park, and to do other work in the park.—G.S.

THE SWAN AND THE TURKEYS

A FABLE

When the achievements of the immortal Columbus were yet in the womb of futurity, and the islands of unexplored seas were arrayed in all the wild grandeur of unravished nature, on one little isolated island dwelt a community of swans—beautiful, white, singing swans. Although these birds were aware of the existence of other birds on other islands, from the tales of wandering swans, they had no intercourse with any creature inferior to themselves; and as beauty and gracefulness were their every-day attire, and their inward nature equal to their external appearance, they consequently were less conscious of their own attractiveness, and, therefore, their love of admiration and praise was not very great. But although this was generally true, it was not true in every case; there was one notable exception, which is the subject of my tale. This was a young

swan who was fully conscious of himself. As there were many others of equal beauty and attractiveness, he drew far less attention and adulation from his associates than he yearned to enjoy. But he did not blame them; he knew the cause; he knew there were many swans who differed from him only in being less fond of adulation, and in being content with their share of the whole which they unitedly bestowed on their own superior race. Now, it was known to these swans that there was another island lying about as far from them as a swan could fly in a day, and this island was inhabited by a bird called a turkey—a bird far inferior to themselves—a coarse, ungainly, unmusical bird, but of kindly disposition. These facts had been gained from some swans who had visited the island and stayed over night, and it was said that the turkeys made much ado over their strange, white visitors. Now this young swan conceived that it would be more pleasing to him to live with these turkeys, and be worshipped and idolized by them, than to live with his own kind; and he would leave nothing behind him worthy of his notice, for in himself he would take away all the highest attributes of his race, and he felt sure that the turkeys would have no other gods but one when he arrived and made known his purpose of living among them. When he expressed his views to his associates, the younger ones laughed at him, but the old swans gravely

rebuked his wild and foolish notions; but they could not deter him from going to the land of turkeys. When they saw him resolved to go they told him very gravely that he should never return; that if he did, they would pluck every feather off his body, and hold him up to the contempt of all. If a chance of deterring him yet remained, this sarcastic threat snatched it away, for he was not the kind to be restrained by fear, and the next morning at sunrise he bid adieu to his old companions and all, and spreading his white wings to the morning sun he sped like an arrow to the isle of turkeys. We will now leave swan island, as our hero has done, and like him we will never return to it again. As his strong pinions bore him along through the yielding air, from the isle of his birth to that of his adoption, he mused on his reception by the turkeys, and the adulation they would lavish on a bird so much their inferior. It was late in the afternoon when he arrived at his new home, and seeing a large flock of turkeys on the shore he alighted among them, and saluting them in his blandest and most captivating style, made known at once his mission; and at the close of his short but eloquent address, in which he elevated them much above their turkey nature, he was adopted by acclamation.

For a few days all went well, and the swan thought he had done well; for although his hopes

had not been fully realized, he was sure their love and respect for him would increase as the higher attributes of his race, which he possessed in a high degree, became known and understood. But the realization of hope born of passionate desire is too frequently without the circle of probability, and not unfrequently that of possibility; and of this the swan had an illustration.

It soon became evident that curiosity and his own flattering address delivered at their first meeting were chiefly instrumental in securing him the attention he thus far enjoyed, and that the qualities by which he thought to win their applause and admiration had no existence in their minds, and that they expected as much, if not more, from him than he did from them. He next assigned himself the task of enlightening his new friends, with little idea of its magnitude; and to make it as agreeable as possible, he proposed to deliver lectures daily on interesting subjects. To this they consented, and the next day he addressed them on metaphysics; but the physic was powerless, and the next day when he was about to address them on cosmography, one of them moved to postpone the lecture and have a gobbling match, to see who could gobble the loudest and longest. This was answered by a gobble all round, and that was the end of the course of lectures. The swan was now compelled not only to

hear, but to applaud the most horrible din he had ever heard.

The cup of his disgust was now full; and the thought of going back to his native isle was forced upon him, but he indulged it not a moment. He had no doubt that a candid confession of his folly would secure his forgiveness at once; but he could not stoop to it, so he resigned himself to his fate. But he still strove to make an impression on their stupid minds. One day, when the sea was rough, he amused himself and them by flying out on the sea and riding in on the crest of the waves. A turkey-cock present—the one that won the gobbling match—came forward and said there was no trick in that; he could do it himself; and at it he went; but he took care not to go out more than four or five times the amplitude of the wave. But as soon as he alighted he turned keel uppermost, and as the waves brought him in his feet were now and then seen bobbing out of the water. When the waves threw him on the shore he cut a nice figure for a proud, conceited turkey-cock. His wet, matted feathers pointed in all directions; his tail feathers were broken and lay on his back, while the top of his head was bald and bleeding by being dragged on the bottom. At this adventure his turkey friends laughed till the shore resounded, but the white foreigner, fearing the consequences of laughing at this bully's mishap, tried to look grave; but a

smile could not be suppressed. The turkey saw that smile, and it was enough. Giving himself a shake or two to arrange his disordered feathers, he rushed at the swan. From this assault our hero took refuge on the same element that had brought him into trouble, knowing that his assailant would not follow him there. Now began a parley. The turkeys, seeing the prospect of a fight, urged him to come ashore, but he declined to fight, just as a well-bred and educated man would decline to fight a rough, or to fight any man. This the turkeys attributed to cowardice, for they could see no other motive, and began at once to laugh at him and call him a coward, and all manner of insulting names, during which time the offended turkey strutted to and fro on the shore, making the most furious demonstrations of what he would do to the swan if he would come ashore, to which the swan sarcastically replied, "I'll meet you half way." This hit at his adventure made him boil over with rage, and he delivered himself as follows:—"If you dar come ashore, you long, crooked-necked*****, I'll punch the liver out of you. You'd better not get up to preach mography to us any more; be off home, and preach your cussed mography to your own cussed kind. I could lick a dozen such chaps as you to onst. If I had a hold on you, I'd twist your bloody long neck for you, so I would." After this he cooled down, for rage will exhaust itself

even in a turkey, as well as in men of the turkey grade, and the swan was permitted to come on shore without being assailed. But his last hope perished here; the turkeys not only thought they were his equal, but some of them, not a few, thought they were far his superior, and would often strut by him without acknowledging his presence. But he felt only pity for the contemptible fobs. None of the turkeys any more sought his company, and he now had to follow them or be left alone, and he nearly always chose the latter. He wandered much by himself, and sang to himself, but his songs were not such as he sung in his native isle, when his heart was yet unknown to the lust of worldly ambition; they were songs of a heart full to overflowing with bitterness. The following lines are part of one of his lonely musings:

Weary of life, I ponder o'er
  The mystery that involves the dead;
My feet impatient to explore
  The ground that mortals shrink to tread.

He pined away, and ere he had reached the meridian of swan life he felt the approach of the grim but welcome deliverer, death; and in his last unhappy moments the spirit of a departed swan, perhaps his mother, hovered over him,

waiting to escort him to that "happier island in a watery waste"; and as it hovered it sung, and the last words that fell on the ear of the dying swan were:

Till eagle's wings bear turkeys through the skies,
Shall turkeys see not but with turkeys' eyes.

THE BITER BIT

Mr. Isaac Bobbington kept his life insured for a very large sum, and he never went on board a steamboat or a car without taking an accident ticket for about twenty thousand, leaving the ticket with his loving and very beloved wife, so that if he lost his life she would receive a small compensation for her great loss. One day, after the usual precaution, he went on board a Mississippi steamboat. That evening, as it was growing dark, and when they were near the shore, the boiler exploded, and many were killed or drowned. Mr. Bobbington received no injury, and, being a good swimmer, he swam ashore. Starting down the river to give the alarm, he had not gone far when the headless body of an unfortunate man was washed ashore at his feet. He looked at it sadly and wondered whether or not he had taken an accident ticket. Suddenly it came to him like a revelation that he had not; and he thought what a great pity that such a splendid opportunity of realizing the benefit of an accident ticket should be forever lost. As he mused thus, it struck him that it was his

duty to counteract as far as he could the evil consequences of this man's neglect. So, under cover of darkness, he changed suits with the dead man, leaving his own pocketbook, with a number of papers bearing his name and a small sum of money and some small articles on the body, and taking with him the unfortunate's pocketbook, well filled with bills, and a small bag of gold, he started for the nearest town on the "double quick." He there drew on his little bag for a new suit, and, after putting himself in gala trim, he took train for a city at some distance from home and took rooms at a first-class hotel, and, ordering two or three daily papers, prepared to make himself comfortable. He waited anxiously for a list of the killed, and when it came it contained the name of Mr. Isaac Bobbington, whose body, wanting the head, was washed ashore about forty rods below where the explosion took place. The next day he read of the funeral and the great grief of Mrs. Bobbington. He pitied her very much, but he felt she would be amply rewarded for her grief in the sweet "bye-and-bye," when they got all that money and got away to some strange city. He now waited anxiously for the settlement of the claims. But he had to wait long. It was three or four months before he saw them mentioned in the papers. But at last he was rejoiced to read that Mrs. Bobbington's claim of about forty thousand had been paid. He now grew uneasy.

The thought of so much money being paid into his house, and he away, was hard to bear. But something must be done now. "The fruit is ripe, and it must be gathered," he thought to himself, and he concluded to write to his wife and tell her his trick, and intrust her to sell out and come to him. Then he thought of her great joy at receiving his letter, and her reply bubbling with delight. So he sent her a letter, telling her all, and waited with the utmost impatience for a reply. It came, and ran as follows:

"O, you audacious old scoundrel! How dare you attempt to impose on a lone woman in such a way! It was my own poor, dear husband that was brought home to me with his head blown off, so it was. Everybody knows that. You want to get hold of the few dollars that I got for the loss of my dear, dear husband; but they are safe. I put them for safekeeping into the hands of a young gentleman who came to our town just after the death of my husband—a Mr. Thottle—and he is going to operate on stocks with them. He also has charge of all my affairs, and if you come here he will take charge of you. Now, if you write to me again, I will send the police force after you; now mind, I will.—MRS. BOBBINGTON."

When Mr. Bobbington read this, he felt as though his heart had been suddenly immersed in ice water. He grew dizzy and staggered to a

chair and fell into it with a groan. Had she made no mention of Mr. Thottle he would have concluded that she believed herself to be the intended victim of some desperate villainy, for, guilty as he was himself, he trusted in his wife as a little child trusts its mother. But the thought of Mr. Thottle, a stranger, being the guardian of his wife, and "operating on stocks" with his money, was enough to disturb his mental balance, and he cursed stocks, insurance companies and steamboats, and wished his head had been blown off instead of the stranger's. The next day, having recovered his self-possession in some degree, he read in his daily paper the following paragraph:

"We are glad to learn that Mrs. Bobbington, the widow of the late lamented Isaac Bobbington, has been prevailed upon to take a trip to the seaside to recover her health after her severe prostration caused by the death of her husband. She goes in company with Mr. Thottle and his sister, Mary Thottle. They start next week. A happy journey to them."

"Curse the Thottles! Could she not go without them?" said Mr. Bobbington to himself, after he had read the paragraph. "But I have it now. I'll meet her at the seaside when she is alone, and when she sees me it will be all right," and he felt a feeling that, compared with his feelings of the last twenty-four hours, had a remote likeness to pleas-

ure. They started on the trip, and so did he; and after much watching and waiting he at length met her sufficiently aside to converse in common tones. His lips were parted to speak, when she threw up her arms and cried:

"Gracious heavens, his ghost!"

"No, no, my dear, I'm not a ghost; I'm your husband."

"You're not! you're not! I say you're not! you're a ghost! Don't come an inch nearer me, or I'll scream for Mr. Thottle. You were brought home with your head blown off, and I buried you decently, and there are hundreds of people to prove it; and what do you want to haunt me for? Haven't I mourned enough for you? Don't everyone say that I nearly mourned myself to death? Didn't I spend fifty dollars in mourning, and didn't I weep every day till Mr. Thottle came to me and told me that it was a sin and a folly to mourn so much for a thing that Providence had willed? And now, after being mourned for in the latest style for more than six months, you want to come back; but I tell you plainly, after mourning so long, I will not be disappointed now, so there now."

At this Mrs. B. turned and fled like a deer, and before Mr. B. could rally his bewildered senses she was out of sight. Mr. B. now saw the true state of affairs, and that he had his choice of two evils, namely, to submit to the new order of things

or disturb that order by a full exposure. He chose the latter, and started at once for the insurance office. When he arrived he looked so much like an escaped lunatic that he had some difficulty in getting an audience with the manager, who listened to him for a minute, and then beckoned to a policeman who was passing, ordered him to take that man to the asylum to await further examination, and when that time came he was thoroughly qualified to pass muster, and a singular feature of his derangement was that he believed he had no head.

LINES TO A SKELETON

Editor of "Notes and Queries":

I find in an old scrap book the "Lines to a Skull," asked for by Mr. I. E. Skidmore, of Cobourg. The authorship of the poem is unknown, though it is said that the editor of the *London Morning Chronicle*, who published it, offered fifty guineas in the vain attempt to find out.

"Behold this ruin! once the skull
Was of ethereal spirit full;
This narrow cell was life's retreat,
This space was thought's mysterious seat:
What beauteous visions filled this spot
With dreams of pleasure long forgot!
Nor hope, nor joy, nor love, nor fear,
Have left one trace of record here.

Beneath this mouldering canopy
Once shone the bright and busy eye;

But start not at the dismal void!
If social love that eye employed,—
If with no lawless fire it gleamed,
But through the dews of kindness beamed,—
That eye shall be forever bright,
When sun and stars are sunk in night.

Within this hollow cavern hung
The ready, swift and tuneful tongue;
If falsehood's honey it disdained,
And when it could not praise was chained;
If bold in virtue's cause it spoke,
Yet gentle concord never broke;
That silent tongue shall plead for thee
When time unveils eternity.

Say, did these fingers delve the mine,
Or with its envied rubies shine?
To hew the rock or wear the gem,
Can little now avail to them.
But if the page of truth they sought,
Or comfort to the mourner brought,
These hands a richer meed shall claim
Than all that wait on wealth or fame.

Avails it, whether bare or shod
These feet the path of duty trod?
If from the bowers of ease they fled.
To seek affliction's humble shed;

If grandeur's guilty bribe they spurned,
And home to virtue's cot returned,—
These feet with angels' wings shall rise
And tread the palace of the skies."

Fifty years age the *London Morning Chronicle* published a poem entitled "Lines to a Skeleton," which excited much attention. Every effort, even to the offering of a reward of fifty guineas, was vainly made to discover the author. All that ever transpired was that the poem, in a fair, clerkly hand, was found near a skeleton of remarkable beauty of form and color, in the museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, Lincoln's Inn, London, and that the Curator of the museum had sent them to Mr. Perry, editor and proprietor of the *Morning Chronicle.*

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